SPLENDOR

the new movie by gregg araki

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production note to all departments: this movie is set two years in the future. This does not mean "futuristic" in the stereotypical *2001/Blade Runner/Fifth Element* kind of way. Rather, the idea is to compensate for the two year lag between a film's creation and its release into the general culture - to keep it from being dated before it's even finished... This concept should be kept in mind as it relates to all choices of color, lighting, sets, locations, visual style, hair, makeup, wardrobe, music, etc...

music by

ORB
THE FUTURE SOUND OF LONDON x OIL
LIONROCK
TRICKY
EVERYTHING BUT THE GIRL x DILLINJA
GLOBAL COMMUNICATION
THE PRODIGY
NEW ORDER x ARMAND VAN HELDEN
ORBITAL
UNDERWORLD
ALEX REECE
BOMB THE BASS x DJ POGO
THE BLACK DOG
SEEFEEL

MEAT BEAT MANIFESTO
GUSGUS x LFO
OMNI TRIO
GOLDIE
MIGHTMARES ON WAX
LOCUST
COCTEAU TWINS x MARK CLIFFORD
AUTECHRE
SPEEDY J
BT x RABBIT IN THE MOON
BJORK x ???

All of the music choices mentioned in the script are *temporary and likely to change* - they're included only to give a sense of the movie's aural vibe.

The idea behind the soundtrack is to collect "new electronica" that's as up-to-date and fresh as possible within the logistical limitations of producing/scoring a movie. I'd like to have a totally exclusive, must-have soundtrack LP featuring tracks that are all either unreleased or recorded/remixed just for the film. It'd be conceptually/creatively exciting to mix-n-match groups and have them remix each other (ie. Meat Beat Manifesto remixing Underworld and vice-versa) - obviously, the possibilities are endless...

WHITE. A field of pure, brilliant light...

0 OPENING CREDITS FADE UP, saturated color text materializing in the bright frame as the hypno-ambient throb of *ORB* gradually swells on the soundtrack...

ABSTRACTED PHANTOMLIKE IMAGES begin to faintly emerge, fading away before we can exactly make them out. As flesh-colored shapes slowly, ineluctably take form, we identify **Sex** in progress. A veritable melting pot of luscious flesh...

And the TITLE

SPLENDOR

fills the screen in a phantasmagorical explosion of morphing, rainbow color.

crossfade to

1 int-DISHEVELED WHITE SHEET NOWHERE

Indiscernable human parts continue melding together in a MONTAGE OF CUs, intermittently appearing and disappearing like sporadic, channel-surfed signals from some blocked softcore-porn station.

As the writhing bodies distinguish themselves, we recognize three exquisite examples of twentysomething pulchritude - one female, two male - amidst the tangled, twisting miasma of limbs:

VERONICA, ABEL, ZED.

The MUSIC relentlessly builds, growing louder, filling the surrounds with thumping bass, pounding, pounding, as the carnal gyrations onscreen intensify. Then, just as the sensuous SEQUENCE OF SOUNDS AND SHOTS achieves a trancelike, mesmerizingly erotic groove, we suddenly

FREEZEFRAME

And the MUSIC jarringly CEASES, replaced by a disembodied VO:

veroNICA (VO)

OK. I s'pose some sort of explanation is in order.

hard cut to

2 *int-PINK VOID*

CU - Veronica (23, adorable 90s version of Veronica Lake) addresses the CAMERA against a rosy pink BG:

veronica

Don't know where to start exactly -

back to

3 int-WHITE NOWHERE

OVERHEAD - Veronica, Abel, Zed in a post-coital huddle. Abel (24, grungy boho writer with the scruffy, *Slacker*-thing working big time) snuggles up to Veronica.

veronica

Love you, Abel.

abel

Love you, V.

They kiss softly and CAMERA PANS RIGHT as Veronica swivels towards Zed (also 24, dreamy, but more like a buzzcut alterna-rock version of the Incredible Hulk). Shifting his muscly, tattooed bod, he snorts, cozying up to Veronica's other side.

veronica

Love you, Zed.

zed

Love you, Ron.

As the trio settles in for a night of deep, contented slumber -

back to

4 *int-PINK VOID*

veronica

The beginning I guess.

(scratches her nose)

Two Halloweens ago -

slam cut to

5 int-KWIK STOP.night

Beneath the glaring fluorescents, Veronica and **MIKE**(cute, 24-year-old artschool dyke sporting choppy aquamarine hair with dyed black tips) buy junkfood and pop.

veronica (vo)

My best friend Mike dragged me out of the house on the one night of the year I most want to stay in...

Mike, dressed as a Tampax box, pays the Persian CASHIER who's clad in a Wizard outfit. Veronica, in Cinderella garb, is immersed in *Elle*'s astrological forecast as COSTUMED PARTYGOERS wait impatiently in the BG.

mike

Veronica. Enough with the horoscopes already.

veronica

(still reading)

OK...

Mike snatches the magazine, stuffs it back in the rack.

veronica

I was just getting to the good part.

mike

We're gonna miss the first song...

Grabbing their purchases, she pulls Veronica by the arm.

veronica

I'm coming already. Sheesh.

wizard cashier

Don't you want your change?

He hands Veronica the change as Mike literally drags her away -

INSERT X-CU - TWO SHINY PENNIES deposited in her white palm.

veronica

Gee thanks.

The Wizard Cashier gives Veronica a strange smile as she's bodily jerked out the exit.

cut to

6 ext-KWIK STOP PARKING LOT.night

The streets are abuzz with freaky energy, crawling with CRAZILY-ATTIRED REVELLERS roving in psychedelic packs. Mike pops open a Mango Berry Snapple as she and Veronica walk to her hot pink Millenium Falcon Oldsmobile.

mike

Promise you're not gonna be this much fun all night.

veronica

Mike, I told you--

mike

(mimicking her)

"I never go out on Halloween because there's too many weirdos on the loose in LA as it is."

veronica

It's true.

mike

Ron, live, OK?

(opens her car door)

We're all gonna be bones in the ground one day.

Veronica sighs, not in the mood for arguing. A COUPLE OF SKELETONS pass by behind her.

veronica

(holding out the two cents)

Your change.

mike

Get in the car.

Veronica looks at the coins in her hand. About to climb in the passenger seat, she pauses...

X-CU - The two pennies between her thumb and forefinger.

She closes her eyes. Makes a wish. And in SLOOOOOOOMO tosses the pennies high into the night sky...

mike

What're you doing?

SLOOOOOOOOOMO - The pennies sail through the air, flipping end over end...

veronica

Nothing.

She gets in the car, *SLAMS* her door.

SLOOOOOOOOMO - The pennies reach their apex, begin their downward arc...

cut to

7 ext-HOLLYWOOD BLVD.night

CRAACK!

One penny returns to earth, splitting the plastic faceshield of **ABEL**'s motorcycle helmet as he cruises, clad in a knight costume, on his Kawasaki.

abel

Whatthe??--

He swerves, narrowly avoiding a head-on with a car which ***HOOOOONKS*** its blaring horn.

As Abel stares, crosseyed and puzzled, at the fracture in his helmet's windguard...

cut to

8 ***THWUP!***

Penny #2 finds its target: the noggin of **ZED**, in a Tarzan loincloth, riding with his drums in the back of a pickup.

zed

OW!!

His bandmate MUTT, dressed as the Great Pumpkin, emits a puff of cigarette smoke.

mutt

What?

Zed touches his smarting temple, fishes around the truckbed for the projectile that nearly took his eye out. He locates, holds up

X-CU - Veronica's lucky penny.

He looks at the coin, boondoggled...

smash cut to

9 int-CLUB.night

Jampacked with wildly-garbed SCENESTERS."*We Have Explosive (Oil Funk Remix)" by THE FUTURE SOUND OF LONDON* BLARES over the house speakers.

veronica (vo)

Mike was hot for the bass player in some dumb local band, so we go to this club - The Scaggy Scuzpit, The Festering Stinkhole...

Veronica and Mike getting squashed in the claustrophobic cattle-herd next to the stage. A SPACE ALIEN cuts in front of them, sloshing their plastic cupfuls of beer -

mike

'Scuze me! Dick.

(excited, to Veronica)

They're gonna go on any second -

Veronica smiles tightly, sips her beer as the lemminglike flow of CLUBRATS increases. The air growing thinner and ranker by the second, she feels like she's about to pass out.

mike

(shouts)

Havin' fun yet?

veronica

Loads.

Rudely shoved by a BALD SHIRTLESS GOOMBAH whose skin is painted gold, Veronica spills half her beer on the knight to her right -

abel

Ah *jeez--*

veronica

Sorry...!

Beer dripping off his fake shining armor, Abel's pissed till his mahogany eyes connect with Veronica's for the first time.

abel

(anger melting away)

s'alright... I'm waterproof.

Veronica smiles, meekly demure. As she and Abel gaze starry-eyed at each other, we

FREEZEFRAME

And the scene goes MOS, live sound replaced by:

veronica (VO)

The minute I met Abel, some switch inside me went on. It was like Fate planned for us to be together but we just hadn't managed to run into each other yet.

RESUME 24 FPS ACTION - As Veronica and Abel are relentlessly pushed together by the mob -

abel

(glad to inch closer)

Crowded.

Likewise feeling the overpowering attraction, Veronica nods.

veronica

Yeah.

Mike notices Abel hovering.

mike

Can we help you?

abel

(taken aback)

uh...

mike

(to Veronica)

Y'OK?

veronica

mhm.

Abel's sussing out the situation "are they gay, just friends...?" His ruminations are cut short though as the house lights dim and the crowd goes apeshit -

mike

(practically wrenching Veronica's arm from its socket)

OhmyGod, here she comes... *OhmyGod!....*

She and Veronica strain to see

THEIR POV

The band takes the stage: ultracool bassist ALISON clad in a cop uniform, singer/guitarist/Great Pumpkin Mutt, and loincloth-sporting studbox Zed with a bandaid on his forehead where he was earlier struck by Veronica's penny.

BACK TO SCENE

As Mike swoons for Alison, Veronica is mesmerized by Zed who settles in behind his drum kit. Again, we

FREEZEFRAME

veronica (VO)

And the first time I laid eyes on Zed, it was like a live wire up my -

SCREEEEEE!!!

RESUME 24 FPS ACTION - As Mutt's microphone feeds back, unleashing an earsplitting *SQUEAL.*

mutt

We're Rover's Got A Boner -

Cheers, "fuck you"s, spitwads come from the audience.

mutt

And you're not. 1-2-3-4-

THE BAND EXPLODES INTO A FURIOUS FRENZY OF SHEER NOIZE instantly transforming the place into a churning, human popcorn popper.

Veronica would be crushed were it not for the chivalry of Abel who shields her from the flying bodies and flailing limbs. Trading shy smiles, they're like two magnets inevitably coming together...

Meanwhile, Veronica's eyes keep irresistably returning to

HER POV

Zed, sinewy muscles rippling as he ferociously pummels his drums.

BACK TO SCENE

Veronica's all hot and dizzy - partly due to the sweltering surroundings but mainly because of the debilitat sexual current she's receiving from Abel on one side and Zed on the other. She's like an overloaded circui getting zapped at both ends...

As the song steadily builds, we crosscut from Veronica pressing into Abel to Zed pounding back to Abel pressing into Veronica to Zed pounding to Veronica, Abel, Zed, Veronica, Abel, Zed, the EDITS coming faster, *faster...*

Just as the progressively intensifying SEQUENCE nears critical mass and the sweat-dripping threesome ar about to explode - A FULL-ON, RAGING *RIOT* breaks out, the overstimulated mob tearing the place apart. People and instruments go flying; speakers get tipped over. It's TOTAL BEDLAM as Zed just keeps poundin away -

MIKE

(yelling in Veronica's ear)

Wicked, huh?

crossfade to

10 ext-CLUB.later

COPS arrive to break up the party as remnants of the motley costumed CROWD loiter before the big, buzzing neon sign that says "NO EXIT".

Veronica and Mike, her Tampax costume in shreds, emerge into the chilly night -

mike

Let's go backstage.

veronica

Think I dislocated my shoulder.

mike

(tugging her good arm)

C'mon, Grandma.

Veronica rolls her eyes as -

abel (os)

w-wait.

She turns to find Abel chasing after them.

abel

(out of breath)

...Hi.

As his eyes meet Veronica's, instant shyness occurs - like they don't know what to say to each other after practically dry-humping in the moshpit earlier.

veronica

Hi.

abel

Was afraid I lost you.

Mike makes a face like she's smelled something weird.

mike

So?

Abel's eyes pan from Veronica to Mike back to Veronica.

abel

I don't mean to...but...are you two...?

mike

(hooks her arm protectively around Veronica)

And what if we are?

Heart sinking, Abel turns to Veronica who, after too long a beat, shakes her head.

abel

(relieved smile)

I know this probably sounds like a lame come-on--

mike

Got that right.

abel

(ignoring Mike)

- But I feel like I...really wanna see you again.

Veronica, flattered, doesn't know what to say.

mike

Listen, bub, why don't you go smoke a clove cigarette or something, OK?

veronica

Mike, it's - (gestures "alright")

abel

I'm not a psycho-stalker or anything I swear. I just -

(takes a breath, doesn't want to blow it)

Y'know how there're those certain moments where you either go for it, or they pass you by and you spend the rest of your life kicking yourself wondering *"what would've happened if...?"*

mike

Is there like a Cliff Notes version or...?

abel

(to Mike, losing it)

Can you gimme a break? I'm tryin'--

mike

To strike out? Obviously.

(grabs Veronica's arm)

Ron, *vamanos*.

Torn, Veronica looks into Abel's painfully sincere eyes...

veronica

Tell you what -

(fishes through her purse)

Why don't I give you my number -

(scribbling on a near-empty box of Jolly Joes)

And... we'll see.

abel

Great.

As Veronica hands him the rattling box of candy, Mike stares at her, nonplussed.

mike

Are you drunk?

abel

(holding her number like a prized talisman)

"Veronica".

(suddenly it dawns)

How do I know this is your real number?

Mike pulls Veronica away as the Cops disperse the remaining crowd.

veronica

You gotta have faith.

abel

I'm calling you tomorrow. What time d'you get up?

veronica

(as Mike's dragging her away)

Noon.

abel

Oh, by the way, I'm Abel!

One final tug from Mike and Veronica's gone from sight. Grinning triumphantly, Abel eats a Jolly Joe, tucks the box in his shirt pocket and exits, walking on air.

cut to

11 ext-ALLEY.night

HANDHELD FOLLOWING Veronica and Mike as they navigate through the leftover CLUB-CRAWLERS partying in the dark, pee-stinky alleyway.

veronica

What'd he say?

mike

His name's Mabel.

Veronica has this "huh?" look on her face as Mike yanks her OS.

cut to

12 ext-BACKSTAGE ENTRANCE.night

A MOHAWKED BOUNCER dressed as an 8-ball sits by the door frenching an ANOREXIC CHICK in a nurse uniform.

bouncer

Gotta pass?

Mike gives him the finger, breezes by with Veronica in tow. The Bouncer shrugs, resumes exchanging tonsils with the Anorexic Chick.

cut to

13 int-BACKSTAGE.night

As *LIONROCK* BOOMS over the house system, Veronica and Mike are once again surrounded by a morass of POSEURS. Shifting immediately into scamming mode, Mike sets her radar for

HER POV

Alison, the epitome of indifferent fabulousness, holding court on a sofa shaped like a pair of big, red lips. She's surrounded by ardent admirers, male and female, all offering to light her dangling cigarette.

BACK TO SCENE

Mike freezes and Veronica collides into her like a fender bender on the Santa Monica Freeway.

veronica

(rubbing the bruised bridge of her nose)

Ow. You kiddin'?

mike

(paralyzed with desire)

There she is!...

Without warning, a FISTFIGHT breaks out right next to them between MICHAEL JACKSON and a SIX FOOT AMAZON WOMAN with a bone through her nose. As the crowd parts like the Red Sea, Veronica suddenly finds herself face-to-face (well, she's more eye-level to his left nipple) with hunky 6'2" Zed.

As his vivid emerald eyes connect with hers, this bolt of lightning goes coruscating through the both of them -

veronica

-!-!-!-!!

zed

uh.....

Oblivious to the sparks flying, Mike grabs Veronica's arm.

mike

C'mon.

Fixed on Target Alison, she hauls the dazed Veronica away as Zed blinks, discombobulated, absently scratching his bandaid.

zed

.....hi.

cut to

BY THE SOFA

which serves as Alison's throne, Mike and Veronica edge closer, conspicuously inconspicuous.

mike

(sotto to Veronica)

I can't believe I'm this close to her. It's like I could lean over 'n' smell her.

veronica

Talk to her.

mike

I'm gonna pee.

veronica

No, *I'm* gonna pee.

mike

*Don't you **dare** leave me alone!*

alison (os)

Brilliant costume.

Mike and Veronica both look

THEIR POV

Alison, smiling, exhales a nonchalant stream of smoke.

BACK TO SCENE

Mike has shit her pants.

veronica

Go get her.

Veronica squeezes Mike's shoulder, swiftly exits as Mike just stands there, gaping at her object-of-desire.

mike

You... (gulp) talkin' to me?

alison

(takes a sultry drag)

None other.

mike

heh.

alison

Wanna sit?

Making room, she *pat-pats* the spot beside her. As Mike fucking dies:

cut to

ACROSS THE WAY

Veronica scans the room for Zed. No luck. She sighs, bummed.

She reaches a trashed door that has a big arrow and the words "YEAH, DUMB ASS, THIS IS THE BATHROOM" spraypainted in silver on it. Leaning against the wall, a couple dressed as BILL AND HILLARY CLINTON fire up a bong.

veronica

(polite)

You in line?

Bill and Hillary look at her, start laughing hysterically.

veronica

Yeah, it's pretty funny.

She opens the door which swings wide to reveal Zed on his way out, drying his hands on his suedehead stubble. He freezes like a Greek statue. So does Veronica. They stand there, dumbstruck, staring at each other for a beat... Two... Three...

Then, without a word, they start passionately sucking face right there on the spot -

15 int-BATHROOM

Staggering backwards into the john, they ***SLAM!*** the door, ***SPLACK!*** lock the latch. ***RIP!*** off with Veronica's costume. ***TEAR!*** goes Zed's loincloth. ***BANG!*** Zed's fist punches the rusty condom machine and a foil packet ***PLOP*** drops into his outstretched palm. Never removing their tongues from each other's throats, they fumble the rubber on then ***GROAN*** do it against the drippy sink, ***GRUNT*** on the filthy toilet, ***WHAM!*** against the graffiti-scrawled wall. It's like *World Championship Wrestling* in fast-forward scan.

veronica (VO)

Needless to say, I'd never done anything even remotely this raunch in my life -

cut to

16 *int-PINK VOID*

VERONICA

Imean, that bathroom was beyond *rank.*

back to

17 int-JOHN

SPLATT! Veronica and Zed land, humping and heaving, on the floor which has like cigarette butts in rancid puddles of piss on it.

Suddenly Veronica breaks away.

veronica

Wait.

zed

What?

veronica

What's your name?

zed

Zed

veronica

Veronica.

They look at each other a beat. Resume going at it like wild animals.

veronica (VO)

It was crazy. Zed was a total stranger, but us getting together seemed inevitable -

back to

18 *int-PINK VOID*

veronica

Like Destiny.

cut to

19 int-VERONICA'S BATHROOM.night

Veronica and Zed going for the Guinness Book of Records, under the torrent of a hot shower.

veronica (Vo)

At least we got to clean up at my place later.

slow fade to DEEP, SATURATED RED

Over RED, the OS phone starts to *RING... RING...* On the third *RING*:

cut to

20 X-CU - Panasonic phonemachine, *CLICK CLICK*, going into answer mode.

VERONICA (VO, her outgoing message)

You know what to do. ***BEEEP.***

int-VERONICA'S LOFT.the next morning

CU - Her lovely face suffused with golden sunlight, Veronica groggily wakes with a dull, pounding hangover...

MIKE (VO, over phone)

So what the f happened to you? You take off with the Missing Link in tow -

Veronica reaches over, lowers the volume of her machine to a barely-there level.

MIKE (VO, continuing)

You didn't actually boff him, did you?

Veronica looks over at Zed zonked out beside her. Experiences major morning-after what-have-I-done trauma -

intercut with

21 int-MIKE'S APT/STUDIO.morning

Smoking a joint, Mike wanders around her vast, ArtCenter-student funky digs in a day-glo kimono. She's on her cordless, ducking under an enormous, half-finished metal sculpture, heading towards the kitchen.

mike

That'd be so atypically spontaneous of you. Imean, you haven't had sex since like, 1993.

back to

int-BEDROOM

Veronica, feeling very naked and exposed, tries covering herself with the sheet...

back to

Mike opens the refrigerator, removes a tin of dog food.

MIKE

Anyhow, absolute zip went down with me and the Goddess.

(spoons some food into a bowl)

Turns out she's one of those hundred-percent hetero teases. Hatin' that.

(putting the bowl on the floor)

Steve, breakfast.

STEVE, Mike's lime green chihuahua, comes scampering over.

mike

(petting Steve as he eats)

But anyway, I get out of Structuralist Theory at like 5, so call me if you still want to go to kickboxing class later -

back to

22 int-VERONICA'S BEDROOM

Veronica struggles with the sheet which is caught under Zed's sleeping body...

MIKE (VO, continuing)

'K, Ciao. ***BEEEP***.

As the answerphone *CLICK-CLACK* resets itself, Zed snorts, smacks his pouty lips. Anxious not to wake him, Veronica gives the sheet a healthy tug -

INSERT - As Zed's private parts are almost exposed.

Veronica freezes. Watches...

INSERT - The sheet begins to slowly rise, forming a telltale puptent.

Veronica's rattled but, at the same time, getting turned on. As Zed stirs, his girlishly full eyelashes fluttering to consciousness -

zed

mmmmmrrh...

He opens his eyes to Veronica awkwardly half-wrapped in the sheet, looking like a spastic Arab maiden.

veronica

Hi.

zed

(happy smile)

Hey.

(noting her discomfort)

Everything OK?

veronica

(trying to ignore his tentpole)

Yeah, uh, fine...

zed

(finally noticing, embarrassed)

oh, sorry. There's wood every morning. I can't help it.

Veronica laughs nervously.

zed

So uh, you have that "Who is this stranger in my bed?" look.

veronica

That obvious, huh? It's just I've never...

zed

Ever?

veronica

No, not *ever* but...

zed

It's been a while.

veronica

Yeah.

Zed smiles his goofy boy grin.

zed

Well, it must be like riding a bike 'cuz you were really...

veronica

What?

zed

...really... good.

veronica

(smiles)

Yeah?

Their faces have gravitated so close together that they find themselves kissing. The chemistry between them is out-of-control...

zed

(totally dizzy, dazed)

I wanna make love to you again.

The feeling's mutual. Veronica kisses him ardently and Zed rolls into position on top of her. He looks down, blinking his eyes like they're shutters capturing the indescribably erotic image of Veronica's anticipating face...

Finally, when neither of them can stand it any longer, he enters her, excruciatingly slowly, making them both wince with pleasure so intense it's like an electric shock.

Revelling in the delirious nirvana coursing through their joined bodies, they open their eyes. Something far beyond simple great sex is transpiring, something so monumental it scares them both. But, just as they begin rapturously rocking back and forth, the OS phone *RINGS* again -

zed

rrrrrrhh--

Veronica grinds her teeth in frustration.

RING.

Struggling to not break the mood, Veronica reaches for the phonemachine...

RING.

CU - Her hand fumbling, trying to find the volume switch...

RING-CLICK CLICK -

VERONICA (VO over machine)

You know what to do. ***BEEEP.***

ABEL (VO over phone)

Veronica?

Veronica's eyes pop open.

ABEL (VO over phone)

It's uh, Abel--

Zed pauses and Veronica quickly rolls over, turns the volume to zero.

zed

Who's that?

veronica

My...yoga teacher.

Before Zed can ask any more questions, Veronica applies an aggressive liplock, knocks him back down onto the bed.

intercut with

23 int-KITCHEN.morning

Abel on his cordless, looking all unshaven, shirt-unbuttoned, with *TRICKY* throbbing in the BG. He's perched on the windowsill with his coffee and cigarette, holding the Jolly Joes box in his hand.

abel

Hope I didn't freak you out last night. I know I was maybe acting a bit peculiar... It's just the minute I saw you, I had the strangest feeling - like *deja vu*, only with a person instead of a place -

back to

24 int-BEDROOM

Veronica digs her nails into Zed's straining biceps -

back to

ABEL

But you probably hate long, rambling messages as much as I do so -

back to

Veronica, grinding atop Zed, moans -

back to

Abel exhales a wisp of backlit smoke.

abel

I'm not leaving my number though 'cuz I can't stand the waiting-for-the-phone-to-ring deal. I'll try back in a couple hours.

veronica

(near the orgasmic brink)

mmmmm -

ABEL

I'm hanging up now. Really.

ZED

uhnnnn -

abel

uh, Veronica?....

Veronica and Zed on the launchpad, primed to shoot into the stratosphere -

ABEL

I -

zed

mmmmhrrrrrr--

abel

Nevermind.

(as he hangs up)

X-CU - The phonemachine goes *CLICK CLACK.* As it ***BEEEEPS -***

veronica/zed

(climaxing with ecstatic, earthshattering force)

--UHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!

While the machine rewinds, Veronica and Zed catch their breath, their heartrates gradually normalizing. Her cheek pressed to Zed's sweatsoaked chest, Veronica exhales, completely blown away...

veronica (Vo)

So that's how Zed and I met. We didn't get out of bed the whole day. I knew it was the start of something major -

cut to

25 *int-PINK VOID*

veronica

But I still felt this bizarre attraction towards Abel too. I wasn't sure why but I felt like I had to at least

call him back...

cut to

26 int-MIKE'S STUDIO.the next day

Mike, on her cordless, saws the head off a male mannequin for one of her projects.

mike

So go ahead. It's not like you have to marry Tarzan because you swung on his vine.

intercut with

27 int-OPPRESSIVE *Metropolis*-STYLE OFFICE.day

On a headset, Veronica sneaks a break from her telephone survey-conducting day gig. She's in her stall in a row of monochromatic mini-cubicles all manned by androidlike WORKER-DRONES.

veronica

I know. I just have a conscience. Sorry.

mike

Ron, your conscience is a bit overdeveloped for a 22 year old, wouldn't you say?

veronica

I s'pose...

Mike fires up a cig.

mike

What's the BFD? Date them both and it's every man for himself.

veronica

You know me. I'm not exactly the "open relationship" type.

mike

Uh, Ron, you're more like the "no relationship" type.

veronica

I know. Figures, I go practically a year without one decent

date - now I've got two potentials at the same time.

mike

Rains it pours.

veronica

(gnawing on a pen cap)

Tell me about it...

cut to

28 int-ABEL'S APT.day

MOS - Abel smiling, chatting on the phone with his Powerbook on his lap and an ashtray overflowing with butts at his side.

veronica (vo)

So, despite the fact that it made me feel like I was cheating on Zed even though we weren't officially together yet -

back to

29 int-OFFICE.day

MOS - Veronica making plans with Abel as her SOURFACED BOSS cruises by, giving her the evil eye.

veronica (vo)

I made a date to see Abel the next night.

As she pretends to look busy...

slam cut to

30 int-ELECTRONICA CAFE.night

Uber-trendy watering hole for Gen-X flotsam and jetsam with *"Before Today (Dillinja Mix)" by EVERYTHING BUT THE GIRL* thumping in the BG. On the walls, huge TV monitors playback footage from surveillance cameras recording the hipster clientele's every move.

Abel nurses a Budweiser at an elevated table, tensely smoking. As he checks his watch, a 10' x 10' video screen behind him puts his anxiety on display for all to see.

Veronica finally arrives, out-of-breath, in a sexy-but-not-too-dressy-for-a-first-date outfit.

abel

(face lights up)

Hi.

veronica

(completely frazzled, settling into her seat)

I'm sorry. My acting class ran over, couldn't find my keys, forgot the directions...I hope you don't think I'm one of those flakes who're always late because I really try to be on time, I just -

(pauses mid-babble to breathe)

Oh, I love this song.

abel

(smiles)

So do I.

Veronica inhales, tries to relax. So does Abel.

abel

So, you uh, wannadrink?

veronica

Bad.

Abel is staring, making her self-conscious.

veronica

What? Do I have lipstick on my teeth or something?

abel

No, you're just um, even more beautiful than I remembered.

veronica

(the compliment makes her even more nervous)

Thanks.

Abel blushes, embarrassed of his smitten state. There's an awkward silence which the harried WAITER thankfully interrupts.

waiter

WhatcanIgetyou?

abel

Oh, uh -

veronica

Midori with pineapple juice.

abel

(holds up his near-empty bottle)

Another...

As the Waiter disappears, Abel and Veronica momentarily panic with nothing to fill in the conversation gap. They both start to laugh.

abel

Sorry. I'm kinda um... I'll get better, I swear.

veronica

Me too. I'm just alittle out of practice...

abel

I hate the whole "dating" ritual. Probably 'cuz I suck at it.

veronica

Well, it's been so long for me that everyone assumes I'm gay. Guess it doesn't help that my best friend's a man-hating dyke.

abel

I hadn't noticed.

veronica

Mike can be...in-your-face, but she's really great once you get to know her.

abel

That's what they said about Aileen Wournos.

Veronica laughs at his bad joke.

abel

It's just a kinda sensitive issue for me... My ex left me for another woman.

veronica

Really?

abel

And it wasn't like I got dumped for Kate Moss or something - Imean, this chick had a moustache.

As the Waiter reappears with their drink order, Abel and Veronica exchange smiles, knowing it's clear sailing from here...

cut to

ELLIPTICAL *Breathless*-STYLE MONTAGE - Veronica and Abel's date with the "boring parts" omitted: shared stories, laughs, round after round of drinks...

VERONICA

I'm just super picky: I get turned off so easily -

ABEL

Same here.

VERONICA

Like the last guy I went out with showed up at my door wearing the *scariest* drawstring pants and (gestures) a beret.

jumpcut

ABEL

I met this great girl at a friend's book-signing. Sparks flying, we went back to her place for a drink. I go to put on some music, find the *worst* CD collection ever: Ace of Base, Don Henley, Hootie - I couldn't help it, I was totally -

(indicates a deflating erection with his finger)

jumpcut

VERONICA

I had a date once with this DJ who left a message on my voicemail the next day saying that he dreamt he was giving me "beautiful head" for two hours"--

ABEL

My friend went out with that guy. He did the same thing to her.

VERONICA
(mortified)
Swear?

jumpcut

ABEL
...Then there was the model with the heroin issue. I just thought she was sleepy alot.

Veronica laughs, drinks.

jumpcut

ABEL
It's so hokey and anachronistic it's embarrassing -
(confessing)
I'm writing a novel but I prostitute myself doing music reviews.

VERONICA
Way worse: starving actor.
(drains her ice-cubes-tinkling glass)

jumpcut

ABEL
Promise you won't think I'm stupid.
(polishes off his umpteenth beer)

VERONICA
(warm-n-woozy)
what?..

ABEL
(leaning in)
I just gotta say...

VERONICA
(also leaning)
Yeah?...

cut to

31 ext-VERONICA'S BUILDING.night

Veronica and Abel's perfect silhouettes meet in a suitable-for-framing, backlit kiss in the doorway. After an exquisite, heart-palpitating beat, as their lips reluctantly part:

abel

I dunno about you, but that was like... *wow.*

Veronica, likewise reeling, smiles as Abel gently strokes her face.

abel

You look so perfect right now in this light.

Veronica feels completely torn as her guilty conscience tussles for control.

abel

(sensing something's up)

What? Am I being too corny?

veronica

No. It's just...there's something I have to tell you.

Abel's heart sinks.

abel

What?

veronica

I really like you *alot.* But...

abel

Here it comes.

veronica

You better come in and sit down.

abel

You're startin' to scare me now...

Veronica bites her lip, opening the door. As Abel follows her inside, getting worried -

crossfade to

32 int-LOFT.later

Veronica and Abel sit on the chiarascuro-lit sofa, *GLOBAL COMMUNICATION* playing, serene and trippy, in the BG. She's just dropped the bomb. He's completely stunned.

ABEL

A *drummer?*

Veronica shrugs, doesn't say anything.

abel

For what band?

veronica

I don't wanna say. Nobody famous or anything.

abel

(shaking his head)

I can't believe I'm getting shafted for a drummer...

veronica

I just want to be completely open and upfront with you. 'Cuz even though we barely know each other, I feel this strange connection happening...

abel

What about with the drummer?

veronica

(mystified)

The same.

abel

How did I know you were gonna say that?

veronica

(sighs, bummed)

You’re freaked out.

abel

(looks her in the eye)

Yeah. I am.

veronica

(hiding her disappointment)

Well, I don’t blame you.

abel

It’s just I’ve never been in a situation like this.

veronica

Neither have I.

Abel gazes into her luminous eyes.

abel

Veronica... I really, really....do not know what to say.

veronica

I’m sorry.

abel

Some guys are emotionally-equipped to handle something like this. Unfortunately, I’m not one of those guys.

veronica

Well, I’m not one of those girls either.

abel

I know. I know you’re not.

They stew for a moment in stymied silence.

abel

Maybe I'd better just go.

veronica

Maybe.

Neither of them move.

veronica

I hope you don't hate me.

abel

No, 'course not. I think you're...amazing. I only wish -

(stops himself)

Yeah. Anyway. I really should -

(gestures "go")

veronica

mhm.

Abel forces his body to rise from the couch. Veronica stands too.

abel

(slowly gravitating towards the door)

You uh, don't have to bother walking me out. I'll just um...

veronica

OK.

abel

So, thanks for the great...night.

veronica

Thank you.

abel

Well.....Bye.

veronica

Bye.

A final wave and Abel's gone, out the door.

Left alone in the dimly lit loft, Veronica feels oddly devastated and empty. She flops back onto the couch, not so sure she's done the right thing.

cut to

33 ext-VERONICA'S BUILDING.night

Anxious to make a clean getaway, Abel *CLINK* fires up a desperately-needed cig on the way to his motorcycle parked in a pool of halogen light.

He climbs onto his bike, puts on his helmet with the cracked visor. Pauses, likewise feeling strangely, overwhelmingly sad...

Collecting himself, he kickstarts his engine and ROARS off down the dark, lonesome street.

back to

34 int-LOFT.night

Her alcohol-soaked brain beginning to throb, Veronica's ready to call it a night. She shuts off the stereo with the remote.

Shuffles to the door, is reaching for the deadbolt when

KNOCK-KNOCK-KNOCK.

Startled, she peers through the peephole

HER POV

FISHEYE-LENS-VIEW of Abel nervously waiting outside.

BACK TO SCENE

Veronica slowly opens the door.

veronica

Hi.

abel

Uh, hi.

veronica

You forget something?

abel

No.

(struggling with himself)

I seriously don't know what I'm doing here. In fact, I'm pretty certain I've completely lost my mind.

(deep breath)

But...

Veronica looks into his eyes which are melting pools of chocolate dark.

abel

I just can't imagine never getting to kiss you again.

VERONICA

(her face lights up)

Really?

Abel nods.

veronica

Me neither.

abel

Yeah?

Veronica smiles.

abel

So let’s just go with the flow... And whatever happens happens.

veronica

Y’sure this is what you want?

Abel nods, shakes his head, nods again. Veronica breaks out in a grin.

abel

What the hell. We could all die tomorrow anyhow, right?

As he and Veronica embrace:

quick crossfade to

veronica (vo)

So Abel spent the night -

35 int-BEDROOM.night

Veronica and Abel huddled in her futon, fully clothed, surrounded by flickering candles.

veronica

Do you think this has any chance in hell of working out?

abel

Nope.

Veronica elbows him in the ribs.

abel

Ow. OK, OK... I think we need to lay down some ground rules: 100 percent honesty. Always. No lies. No sneaking around.

veronica

No guilt. No competitiveness...

abel

Like a drummer could ever be any competition. Please.

Veronica nudges him again.

abel

Veronica, it's innate instinct for the male of the species to want to come out on top...so to speak.

veronica

And it's innate instinct for the female to keep the stupid males from killing each other. Please promise you're not gonna turn this into some asinine ego contest.

abel

Promise.

(lying)

I was only kidding. Jeez...

(melting her skepticism with charm)

God, your mouth looks so luscious right now.

It works. As their lips meet for another sweet taste of heaven:

veronica

Hold me.

Abel does, feeling an unnaturally deep bond with this girl he barely knows. As they curl up, warm and cozy...

veronica (vo)

We didn't have sex. Just cuddled and stayed up all night talking -

cut to

36 int-RED BALLS.afternoon

Veronica and Mike shop in a sea of vinyl, acrylic and day-glo color sipping Jamba Juice lunches. Mike, carrying Steve in her arms, checks out incredibly high platform shoes as *THE PRODIGY* BLASTS over the house stereo.

mike

About?

VERONICA

Life. Fucked up relationships. Our weird family histories. Everything. I've never met anyone I've felt so comfortable with so quickly. Like remember the way you and that Rhonda girl hit it off at first?

mike

Yeah and look how *Fatal Attraction* that turned out.

veronica

Did you ever hear from her after the steak knife incident?

mike

The restraining order seems to be working.

(holding up the highest platform on the rack)

Do you have these in a 7?

The requisite SNOBBY CLERK mumbles something from beneath a mop of scraggly hair, disappears in the back.

mike

(attitude back)

Thanks.

veronica

This thing with Abel is so inexplicable, I don't wanna sound dorky, but it's like a past life thing or something. But I feel totally connected and happy with Zed too. It's just different from Abel...

mike

So CroMagnon Man, you boink like mad. Zippy The Pinhead provides the mental stimulation. You just need five more to complete the set - one for each day of the week.

veronica

I'm serious, Mike.

mike

I'm not? Ron, it's scientific fact that women are sexually superior to men and that a healthy girl can easily take on 2, 3, 10 guys at a time - except that men are completely gross...

Veronica smiles.

mike

Anyways, when feelings are this strong you've just gotta go along for the ride and see what happens...

(suddenly turning and yelling, holding up her shoe)

Excuse me. Who do I have to blow to get some service around here??

No response. The entire sales staff has gone to lunch or something. Mike tosses the shoe to the ground.

mike

This place is ridiculous.

(to Veronica)

Let's get outta here.

cut to

Veronica, Mike and Steve emerge into the blinding sun and noisy chaos of mid-afternoon Melrose.

VERONICA

It's like y'know how everyone's supposed to find that person who you know, deep in your heart, is *the one*...

mike

Yeah...

veronica

That's how I feel about Abel *and* Zed. Like they *both* could be that person.

mike

Uh huh...

veronica

What if it's possible to have *two* ideal soulmates? And to by chance meet both of them at the same time?

mike

You could have worse problems.

Veronica finishes her smoothie with a noisy *SLURRRP*.

veronica

I just wanna do the right thing - be honest with both of them, give them the option to walk away if they want. So tonight, I'm gonna tell Zed.

mike

Think he'll freak?

Veronica shrugs, no idea. Off her growing anxiety:

cut to

38 int-LOFT.night

CU - Zed sits blinking, as if processing the information Veronica's just relayed to him.

ZED

So this other guy, Mabel, he's cool with this?

He and Veronica sit on the couch in virtually the same position she and Abel sat in the night before.

veronica

Well, not "cool" exactly. And his name's Abel.

zed

Oh. Imean, I've done the "dating other people" routine before, but this seems different.

veronica

Definitely "different".

Zed looks at Veronica. While she's relieved to have unburdened herself of the truth, she doesn't want to lose him...

zed

I had a weird feeling when I met you this wasn't gonna be a run-of-the-mill type thing.

He puts his big arm around Veronica, pulls her close.

zed

All I know is I'm crazy about you. And I'm not giving you up.

(tilts her face towards his)

So whatever happens happens.

He and Veronica kiss.

zed

He sounds like a wimp anyway.

Not wanting to go *there* again, Veronica throws herself at Zed. As they tear into each other, the universe imploding all over again, *NEW ORDER's "Bizarre Love Triangle (The Armand Van Helden Remix)"* KICKS IN -

veronica (vo)

So -

cut to

39 OLD-FASHIONED 30's-STYLE MONTAGE

MUSIC CONTINUES OVER pages - November, December, January - fly out of a calendar.

veronica (Vo)

The months went by -

cut to

40 int-NEW BEVERLY THEATRE.night

Veronica sits next to Abel, laughing, munching popcorn on a movie-date.

veronica (vo)

And things got progressively more serious with both Abel and Zed.

THEIR POV

40A A SATURATED, SPLATTERIFIC GOREFEST OF GROSS-OUT DELIGHTS.

BACK TO SCENE

40B Veronica, now with Zed, who cowers in fear watching the same flick.

veronica (vo)

It was confusing sometimes -

cut to

41 int-LOFT.night

MUSIC CONTINUES OVER one of those cheesy *Love Story*-ish tumbling-whilst-screwing-on-a-white-fur-rug shots. But in this instance, every time Veronica rolls over, her partner keeps changing: Abel - Zed - Abel - Zed...

cut to

42 int-BOXING RING.night

MUSIC CONTINUES OVER FANTASY SEQUENCE shot in *Raging Bull* BLACK&WHITE HIGH-CON - Abel in one corner, Zed in the other. Veronica, a human trophy in a sparkly gold bikini, *CLANGS* the bell.

Abel and Zed duke it out in surrealistic SLOMO as Veronica watches, a Miss America smile frozen on her face.

veronica (vo)

And I must admit it got alittle sick and over-the-top. I kept thinking that one day I'd wake up and know which one I wanted to be with -

The guys wooing Veronica, trying to outdo each other. They get on their knees, offer wine, flowers, diamonds, jewelry...

cut to

43 int-LOFT.day

MUSIC CONTINUES as Veronica opens the door to Abel bearing a bouquet of roses and a big red box of Valentines Day candy. She beams.

veronica (vo)

But, as time passed, I found myself falling in love with both of them -

jumpcut

44 int-LOFT.night

Same scene, only this time when Veronica opens the door, it's Zed, holding up the tiniest red g-string ever made. He breaks out in a shit-eating grin as Veronica laughs.

veronica (vo)

Nobody "got it". I didn't even try *to explain it to my mom...*

cut to

45 int-LOFT.afternoon

MUSIC CONTINUES low-level in the BG over Veronica sitting on the living room floor, talking on the phone. She's in the process of painting her left and right finger and toe nails 4 different colors.

veronica

Yeah, Mom. Everything's fine... It is... Totally fine... Oh, so I'm lying to you now. You're suddenly psychic?...

cut to

46 *int-PINK VOID*

veronica

But it was great, for me at least. For Abel and Zed -

back to

47 int-BEDROOM

Abel rolls off Veronica onto his back as the MUSIC STOPS. He sighs.

jumpcut

MATCHING SHOT - Zed rolls off onto the other side of the bed.

zed

(staring into space)

I hate Abel -

jumpcut

abel

(likewise gazing up)

I wish a bolt of lightning would strike Zed 'n' he'd *zzzzzzz* light up so you could see his skeleton like in the cartoons -

jumpcut

zed

I wanna tear his frickin' head off -

jumpcut

abel

- then *pfffffffft,* there'd be nothing left 'cept a little pile of dust.

CU - Veronica also staring at the ceiling.

veronica

Don't be mean.

Abel gives her a disgruntled look.

jumpcut

Zed, the same.

veronica (vo)

Something had to give. Things couldn't go on the way they were forever.

quick fade to BRIGHT ORANGE

hard cut to

48 CU - In SLOMO, Veronica's hands drop floating, cumulus cloudlike dried mushroom bits into a Pyrex beakerful of steeping tea.

veronica (vo)

That spring, there was this huge show up in the mountains. Everybody was playing - Orbital, Rabbit In The Moon, Aphex Twin, Seefeel... I brewed up some special tea for the occasion -

int-ABEL'S KITCHEN.day

Veronica transfers the tea into a thermos.

veronica

I guarantee it'll change your life forever.

In the heat of the gorgeous morning, Abel sits, tapping on his laptop, trying to finish up some work before they embark.

abel

I dunno, V. I gotta be straight enough to review the show.

veronica

(screwing on the lid)

We'll just do a tiny little bit. Plus they're organic.

She comes over, plunks the thermos down on the table.

abel

(diligently typing)

What if I have a bad trip? What if I get brain damage and develop a permanent case of writer's block?

veronica

(wedging between him and his keyboard)

You won't. Trust me.

abel

(little kid voice)

I'm scared.

veronica

I'll protect you, baby.

(kisses him)

Let's *go.* No more working.

She keeps kissing him, goes to shut his Powerbook -

abel

OK, OK, lemme close my file...

He gives in: she wins as usual.

smash cut to

49 ext-GLEN HELEN NATIONAL PARK.golden hour

A HERD OF TEN JILLION BRIGHTLY-HUED RAVEKIDS, all high on some chemical or two or three, bouncing up-and-down to the booming, cacophonous beat of *ORBITAL's "Satan".* It's a dislocating, vertigonous EXPLOSION of eye-bruising color and gut-thumping sound.

CU TWOSHOT - Veronica and Abel clutching ach other by the hand. Boxed in by the claustrophobic MOB, pupils hugely dilated, they're freaking *major...*

Barely able to maintain, they turn and hastily retreat.

crossfade to

50 ext-WOODS.night

Veronica and Abel lie on their backs in a clearing, gradually recovering from their paranoia attack. Far from the maddening crowd, the MUSIC - *"Dark and Long (Dark Train)" by UNDERWORLD* - is reduced to a mellow, near-ambient *THUMP-THUMP-THUMP* in the BG.

veronica

Feeling better?

abel

I'm still seeing superimposed geometric shapes. And everything looks like it's shot through a wide-angle lens...

veronica

What time is it?

abel

Time is totally fucked up.

veronica

What if we go back down and everybody's gone - we've been lying here for a week...

abel

Or everyone's dead. There's been a mass suicide--

veronica

(trying to shut out the horrific image)

Stop.

abel

Yeah, right...

(beat)

I gotta pee.

He slowly sits up like Frankenstein on the operating table. Everything spins.

abel

Whoa, world.

As he unsteadily stands, trying to keep his brain from seeping out his ears, Veronica covers her eyes.

veronica

I just wanna lie here. Not move. Breathe...

Abel

Y'gonna be alright?

veronica

(nods)

Hurry though.

abel

'K...

He staggers off to relieve himself...

cut to

51 A LARGE BUSH

Abel manages to get his pants undone. Stands there a moment, dismayed to find that he can't make any liquid come out.

Concentrating, he looks down

HIS POV

A stream of pee hits his scuffed boots - but it's coming from a urinary tract other than his own.

BACK TO SCENE

abel

Whatthe...?

(delayed reaction)

Hey!

From the other side of the bush, Zed appears, likewise completely out-of-it.

zed

(sucking a Budweiser)

Oh. Sorry, dude.

He stuffs himself back into his pants, buckles up.

Abel looks at his soggy shoes, frowns. Looks back towards Zed, too high to do much but stare blankly. *SUDDENLY -*

veronica (OS)

AAAAAAAAAAA--!!!!

Veronica's bloodcurdling shriek makes Abel and Zed both shit twinkies. Trading wigged-out looks, they scramble to find -

52 BACK IN THE CLEARING

Veronica, sobbing, clutching herself in terror -

VERONICA

AAAAAAA---!!! BUGS!! BUGS!!!

ABEL

(grabbing her by the shoulders)

Veronica! Veronica, what's wrong??!!

VERONICA

BUGS! THERE'S BUGS EVERYWHERE!!

ABEL

Baby, it's OK. There's no bugs... *Shhhh.*

He holds her tight and she clings to him, crying into his shoulder.

veronica

Where'd you go?

abel

I had to pee. It's OK, I'm here now.

veronica

Don't leave me alone again.

abel

I won't. We're fine, I love you, everything's good. It's all about love and it's all good....

Safe in Abel's arms, Veronica begins to calm down. She opens her eyes -

HER POV

WOOZY, BLURRY, gradually COMING INTO FOCUS: Zed standing there, a hallucinating zombie.

BACK TO SCENE

VERONICA

AAAAAAAAAAA--!!!!

abel

Now what?!

veronica

(points)

It's ***Zed!*** *Zed's* watching us!!

abel

(turning around)

?!?!?!

veronica

Make him go away!! Abel, ***make him go away!!!***

Abel wobbles to his feet, not taking his eyes off Zed.

ABEL

You're **Zed?.....**

ZED

Abel???

The guys glower at each other, having trouble focusing their eyeballs, as Veronica looks on horrified -

VERONICA

(talk about bad trips)

Oh ***shit!***

As Abel and Zed stagger in inebriated circles around each other -

ABEL

C'mon. Come get me, you shaved ape.

VERONICA

Guys...

ZED

grrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr...

VERONICA

You guys...

ABEL

C'mon, *Drummer Boy...*

ZED

RRRRRRRRRRR!!--

Zed lunges for Abel and they TEAR INTO EACH OTHER LIKE MAD DOGS -

veronica

STOP! STOP IT!! ABEL!! ZED!!!

DISORIENTING HANDHELD - The guys' mano-a-mano confrontation halted by Veronica sandwiching herself bodily between them -

veronica

BOTH OF YOU - STOP IT RIGHT NOW!!!

Abel and Zed, riled up, hyperventilating, square off -

veronica

(crying, girllike)

Guys... *Please.* I can't handle this right now...

She looks to Abel, to Zed, back to Abel -

veronica

I love you both. *Equally.* Don't fight. Please don't fight...

She puts her arms around the reluctant guys' necks, drawing them together in an unstable triangular truce.

veronica

(closing her eyes)

No fighting. Let's dance... C'mon. Nice and slow... Dancing...

Inexorably, Abel and Zed succumb to Veronica's soothing persuasion. As they begin swaying to the insistent *THUMPTHUMPTHUMP* of the music...

veronica

That's it... Nice...

(exhales)

Dancing...

Like an underwater dream, the trio's chemically-enhanced waltz gradually evolves into something more - a langorous, moonlit ballet of three-way-desire...

The combination of the drugs, sounds, sensations, the sheer almost unbearable pleasure of the experience is overpowering... Sensually rocking back-and-forth to the rhythm, Veronica, Abel, Zed start to touch, undress one another, exploring the frontier of each other's tingling flesh...

Intertwined like some beautiful, arabesque statue, the threesome recede into the dark woods. As they inexorably disappear from sight, faraway and barely audible in the BG, *UNDERWORLD* wraps up their set and the distant, ecstatic crowd *CHEERS*...

slow fade to RICH, GOLDEN YELLOW

smash cut to

53 CU - Mike's disbelieving face.

MIKE

No *way!*

ext-"BROWN-N-SERVE" TANNING SALON.day

Veronica and Mike hang out in the May sunshine. Mike on a cigarette break from her day job, Veronica sipping a Mocha Freez.

mike

Did they... each other?

veronica

I don't think so. Not really. We were so messed up, it's kind of a blur...

She drinks her drink as Mike rolls her eyes.

veronica

Anyways, they're both coming over for dinner tonight so we can "talk" about what happened.

mike

Does it concern you at all that your life's turning into a *"Three's Company"* rerun?

veronica

Yes.

mike

That's sad.

Mike, shaking her head, drags on her cig.

mike

I can't top your three-way story but, guess who I got together with this weekend?

veronica

You got together with someone? Who?

Mike smiles, all cat-who-ate-the-canary.

veronica

Who??

mike

Alison.

veronica

Halloween hetero bass-player? *That* Alison?

Mike nods, trying to keep from grinning.

veronica

Details--

Just then, MIKE'S STUPID BOSS pokes his head out the door.

mike's stupid boss

Yo, Bluehair, y'wanna maybe help out a customer or two in here?

mike

No.

mike's stupid boss

Two minutes.

He *SLAMS* the door. Mike flicks her cigarette at it.

mike

Guess I'll fill you in later.

veronica

Gotta run to an audition anyway.

mike

Well, good luck tonight.

Anxious, Veronica crosses her fingers - she'll need it.

cut to

54 CU - Three freshly microwaved Cornish Game Hens sit in a row on a neatly set, candlelit table. Untouched, looking like a page out of *Ladies Home Journal.*

int-LOFT.night

Veronica nervously looks left: CAMERA PANS to Abel sitting there, uncharacteristically mum. Veronica glances right: CAMERA PANS to Zed, likewise uptight.

THREESHOT - the trio fidget, tension building, as Santa Ana Winds waft through the window, making them even more sweaty and uncomfortable...

veronica

(grabbing the Merlot)

You guys wanna drink?

crossfade to

55 CU - The wine bottle, now emptied, is placed *CLUNK!* next to two others on the coffee table. *"One-To-One Religion" (DJ Pogo Remix)" by BOMB THE BASS* is playing over the stereo.

veronica (OS)

Well, that's it for the wine -

int-LIVING ROOM.later

Abel, Veronica, Zed, now quite inebriated, have migrated to the sofa.

veronica

(staggering towards her liquor stash)

Anyone for Jager?

Zed yawns, kicking back. Putting his feet up on the table, he accidentally knocks the empty bottles over.

ABEL

Classic.

ZED

Bite me.

veronica

Boys. No squabbling.

(brandishing the Jager)

Let's play a game.

quick crossfade to

WOOZY ELLIPTICAL MONTAGE with *BOMB THE BASS* continuous in the BG:

CU - Abel, reluctantly playing, takes a swig.

abel

Truth.

veronica

Have you ever...had sex with a guy?

abel

(makes face)

Tsch. *No.*

quick crossfade to

CU - Veronica drinks.

abel

Have you had sex with a girl?

veronica

Once, drunk at a party, I kissed a girl and let her touch my boobs.

quick crossfade to

CU - Zed takes a big gulp.

veronica

Have *you* ever had sex with a guy?

zed

Define "sex".

VERONICA	ABEL
(lights up)	(disconcerted)
Really?	Oh god.

zed

I haven't--

veronica

Buttfucked anyone -

zed

Uh huh, but--

veronica

You've honked on bobo??

Zed shrugs. Veronica's delighted as Abel goes

abel

ugh.

quick crossfade to

CU - Abel, getting lit, drinks some more.

abel

Dare.

veronica

I dare you to take off your shirt.

abel

Shit.

He grudgingly complies.

quick crossfade to

CU - Zed, likewise buzzing.

veronica

I dare you to take off your pants.

Zed whips ‘em off without a care.

quick crossfade to

CU - Veronica, blitzed.

zed

I dare you to take off your shirt *and* your pants.

Veronica, what the fuck, does.

quick crossfade to

CU - Abel, now bombed.

veronica

I dare you to kiss Zed.

abel

No *way.*

veronica

C’mon. That’d be *so hot.*

abel

V...

veronica

You are *totally* turning me off right now.

Abel looks at Veronica, then to Zed, super-uncomfortable... He gives Zed a quick peck on the cheek.

veronica

On the *mouth!* No fair.

abel

You said kiss. You didn’t specify where.

veronica

(miffed)

Suck.

quick crossfade to

CU - Veronica, giggling.

zed

I dare you to strip naked and dance around.

veronica

Noooo!

(naughty smile)

Like fully?

zed

(turned on just thinking about it)

Yuh huh...

Taking a fortifying gulp of Jager, Veronica wobbles to her feet. Shyly at first but gradually growing more bold, she does a slinky, tantalizing stripper routine in time to the MUSIC...

As the guys go dry-mouthed with lust, she peels off her lace bra, lays it atop Zed's head... *Slooooowly* wriggles out of her panties, waves them teasingly in Abel's blissed-out face...

crossfade to

CU - Zed, still wearing Veronica's bra like a makeshift beanie.

veronica

I dare you to kiss Abel, full on the lips, tongue, everything.

abel

Waitaminute--

veronica

This is *his* dare, not yours.

Zed takes a burning drink. Looks at Veronica, then at Abel who tenses but who's so randy from Veronica's little dance number that he's pretty much helpless.

zed

Don't be scared, dude. It's not gonna kill you, I swear.

Abel gulps. Zed, all foxy, slooooooooowly, irresistably leans towards him... The temperature rises as the guys' perfectly matched profiles get closer, closer, like worlds about to collide... Veronica moves in for a better view, utterly transfixed as Zed lays a tender but unabashedly hot kiss on Abel's trembling lips -

veronica

(beyond turned on)

*oh **jeez...***

As the trio surrender to the crazy erotic pull between them...

long, slow fade to VIVID GREEN

VERONICA (VO)

Every relationship I'd ever been in was lacking something -

hard cut to

56 ext-FRONT YARD.day

OPTICALLY-PROCESSED SUPER-8 FOOTAGE - Veronica, Abel, Zed splashing on a Slip-N-Slide, horsing around with a WaterWiggle on a cloudless spring day.

veronica (vo continuing)

Being with Abel and Zed made me totally happy. It was beautiful, unlike anything any of us had ever experienced...

As the SUN-DRENCHED, SUPER-SATURATED IMAGES vibrate off the screen, we

FREEZEFRAME

veronica (vo)

Cut to: A few weeks later -

cut to

57 int-HOT DOG ON A STICK.day

MOS - Looking ridiculous in a too-small, psychedelic-bright polyester uniform, Zed gets reamed out by his MANAGER who's demonstrating the proper way to make lemonade with a pogo-stick.

veronica (vo)

Zed got fired from his day job -

MOS - Zed tells his boss to shove it, storms off.

cut to

58 ext-ZED'S APT BUILDING.night

MOS - His belongings strewn all over the yard, Zed shouts up at his ROOMMATES who toss his things from the second story window. It's a veritable rain of CDs, old vinyl, dirty laundry, empty pizza boxes, etc.

veronica (vo)

- Couldn't pay his rent, and got booted from his place.

MOS - As Zed silently hollers "Fuck you"s at his ex-roomies, he's struck across the face with his ratty, ancient teddy bear.

cut to

59 int-LOFT.night

Zed sits depressed on the sofa, a tattered cardboard boxful of his stuff on his lap. He's tugging on his teddy bear's ear and looks like he's about to cry. Veronica has her arm around his shoulder.

zed

Can't believe they kept my drums.

veronica

It’s OK, baby.

zed

(starts bawling)

I’m gonna get kicked outta the band without them...

veronica

Oh, c’mere...

He crumples into her arms and she consolingly strokes his head...

veronica (vo)

Me, the sucker, let him move in. Temporarily.

cut to

60 int-KITCHEN.day

In the scorching July heat, Zed’s underneath the sink, fixing a leak. Veronica’s perched on the counter, reading a script, playing plumber’s assistant as *THE BLACK DOG* percolates over the stereo in the BG.

veronica (vo)

Three weeks later, when it became apparent that “temporarily” *meant* “until the end of time”...

zed

(tightening a washer)

OK, try it again.

Veronica turns the faucet, soaking Zed with a mini-waterfall.

zed

OFF! OFF!! Turn it OFF!!

veronica

(closing the faucet)

Oops.

Zed emerges from beneath the sink, sopping wet.

veronica

Sorry.

Zed doesn’t say anything. Veronica fetches a dishtowel; there’s the OS SOUND of the front door opening. As Abel enters, more than alittle on-edge:

veronica

Hey poop.

abel

Hi.

zed

(barely acknowledging Abel)

Hey.

(to Veronica)

Hand me the pipe wrench, willya?

Veronica does and Zed crawls back under the sink.

abel

V, can we uh... (indicates "talk")

veronica

(puzzled look, then to Zed)

Be right back, 'K?

zed

whuh?

veronica

I said I'll be right back.

zed

(re-attacking the crusty pipes)

Alright...

cut to

61 ext-VERONICA'S BUILDING.day

Veronica leans against the wall as Abel *CLINK* fires up a cig in the same spot where the two of them kissed for the first time.

abel

This is not acceptable, OK? The three of us can have sex, sleep in the same bed, people can think we're deviant freaks, I don't care. But I am not cool with Zed living here like this.

veronica

It's only temporary.

abel

It's been *three weeks* and he's not even *pretending* to look for a new place anymore.

veronica

He doesn't have any money.

abel

That's 'cuz he doesn't have a *job.*

veronica

So he's having a rough time and I'm helping him out. I'd do the same for you.

Abel sighs, takes a frustrated drag of his cig.

veronica

(shrugs, trying to lighten the mood)

'sides, plumbers are expensive.

abel

I'll pay for a goddamn plumber, OK? I'm serious, V. I want him out of here.

Veronica looks at Abel, can't help but smile.

veronica

Abel. You're jealous.

abel

Fuck right I'm jealous. Either Zed moves out or...

veronica

Or what?

abel

Or.....

Off Abel's escalating exasperation:

cut to

62 int-LOFT.the next day

Abel, hauling a huge crateload of his stuff, pushes through the front door. Veronica and Zed (a bit miffed) trail behind, likewise carrying boxes, helping him move in.

veronica (vo)

So by the end of the summer, the three of us were living together -

cut to

63 ext-LA BREA TAR PITS PARK.day

MOS - Veronica, Abel, Zed having a picnic on an awesome August afternoon - it's like a scene out of Renoir's *A Day In The Country* only there's a fake Mastodon in the BG. They're clowning and laughing, knocking each other down on the grass.

veronica (vo)

One happy, kooky family.

THREESHOT - Veronica holds up a disposable camera, taking a group self-portrait. On the *FLASH*, we

FREEZEFRAME

cut to

64 int-BATHROOM.night

CLICK. The harsh white light switched on as Veronica sleepily shambles to the toilet for a 3 a.m. pee...

veronica (vo)

Things weren't always perfect -

She falls in the bowl, legs akimbo, cold water freezing her ass.

veronica

EEYAAAAAGH!!

She sighs, annoyed.

veronica

Who left the seat up again?!?

65 IN THE BED

Abel and Zed exchange sleepy-eyed "not me" looks.

cut to

66 ext-THIRD STREET PROMENADE.day

MOS - Our threesome walk arm-in-arm through the crowd, attracting disapproving looks from PASSERSBY, young and old.

veronica (vo)

But, as demented as our relationship may have seemed to the outside world, it worked.

cut to

67 int-LOFT.night

The trio curled up on the sofa in the TV's flickering blue cathode glow as *"Minky Starshine" by SEEFEEL* fills the soundtrack. With the remnants of fresh-baked cupcakes littering the FG, Veronica sleeps as Abel gently touches her hair and Zed strokes her forearm. The three of them are the picture of wonky domestic bliss.

veronica (vo)

Life was good.

cut to

16mm STOCK FOOTAGE - The PLANETS orbitting around the Sun in a balanced Solar System. Celestial Harmony as pictorially represented for 6th Grade Science students. As the MUSIC lingers, shimmering, beautiful:

slow, serene fade to CYAN

hard cut to

68 *int-PINK VOID*

veronica

But we couldn't just live happily ever after. Too easy. Fastforward to October. My agent DJ sends me in on this TV movie -

cut to

69 int-LOFT.night

Veronica, propped up on pillows by the crackling fireplace, reads a script, "A MATTER OF JUSTICE: THE BECKY WITTER STORY". Zed lies, head in her lap, perusing the latest *Muscle & Fitness* while Abel sits crosslegged at the coffee table, typing notes into his laptop.

veronica

(done, shuts the script)

Unbelievable.

Abel and Zed both stop what they're doing, look her way.

veronica

This script is *so bad*. It's--

jumpcut

70 MATCHING CU - Veronica the next day, a sunny smile frozen on her face.

veronica

It's great. It's really...unbelievable.

int-CASTING OFFICE.day

Veronica sits across from the CASTING DIRECTOR, a stressed, chain-smoking woman in her 40s, and **ERNEST**, producer/director of said MOW. In his early 30s, Ernest is a movie-star gorgeous, All-American-boy-grown-up, dressed for success in a California-casual way that says "nice guy, loaded".

ernest

(stroking his neatly trimmed goatee)

We're very fortunate. Because of its quality, the project's attracted alot of top-name talent -

casting director

(emits a cloud of smoke)

Yasmine Bleeth.

ernest

Yasmine's attached as Becky and I'm looking to discover a fresh face for the part of Kelly, her sister.

His electric blue eyes scrutinize Veronica who's still got the exact same smile on her face.

veronica

Cool.

ernest

I don't know if you saw my last picture "SHATTERED SOUL: PORTRAIT OF A HOUSEWIFE STRIPPER" -

veronica

I think, maybe.

ernest

Well, it got a thirty share. Anyway, I'm going for a similar Italian Neorealist feeling here. Like DeSica's *Bicycle Thief*...

veronica

(nodding)

mhm.

ernest

So -

He claps his hands alittle too hard, startling Veronica.

ernest

Shall we read?

veronica

Sure.

ernest

(whipping out his Hi-8 Handycam)

Hope it's OK if I put you on tape.

Veronica nervously shrugs as he switches the camera on -

VIDEO POV - Veronica looking self-consciously into the LENS.

Ernest smiles, liking what he's seeing.

VIDEO POV - Veronica can't wait to get the hell out of there...

SOUND PULLUP

veronica (OS)

I bombed.

crossfade to

71 int-VERONICA'S TOYOTA CAMRY (MOVING).night

Crawling through rush hour, Veronica talks on her portable phone as*"I Control" by MEAT BEAT MANIFESTO* is plays over the stereo.

veronica

uh huh. I've never been more awful.

intercut with

72 int-KITCHEN.night

Zed, wearing an apron, browns tofu in a skillet as Abel sets the table in the BG.

zed

Well, at least it's my turn to cook so you'll have a good dinner to come home to. How long...?

veronica

Half hour, forty-five maybe? Traffic's a joke.

zed

Hurry. I miss you.

Abel, done setting, picks up the extension.

abel

I miss you too.

veronica

Hi, babe. Hey, did you get us on the list for Spring Heel Jack tonight?

abel

Of course. The promoter, as usual, gave me shit about the plus 2 though so I told him Zed was our seeing eye dog.

Zed gives Abel the finger.

veronica

Have you two been behaving?

abel

Like missionaries. How went the audition?

veronica

Disaster. I'll tell you all about it at dinner.

abel

Well, Caveman's cooking so bring your barfbag.

Zed

That was so funny I forgot to laugh.

veronica

Wait, you're breaking up. My battery--

ABEL

Wh? I can't... ZED

Ron?

veronica

Abel?? Zed???

Frustrated, she snaps her phone shut. Just then she hears a weird *THUNKTHUNKTHUNK* sound. She turns down her stereo. The *THUNKTHUNKTHUNK* is unmistakably coming from her engine.

Filled with sinking dread, she pulls over.

cut to

73 ext-STREET.night

Veronica checks under her hood as steam billows into the cold autumn night.

veronica

Oh, for shit's sake.

She *SLAMS* the hood shut. Tries her phone again - expressly purchased for this predicament. It's dead as a doornail. She looks around the traffic-clogged avenue, half-infuriated, half-getting-scared...

Headlights approach illuminating her in stark, harsh white. She can barely make out a big, black Range Rover coming her way -

A DARK FIGURE climbs out of the Range Rover. As Veronica frantically searches her car for something to defend herself with:

dark figure (OS)

Veronica?

Veronica whirls around, gripping her Club -

ernest

(backing off)

I come in peace.

veronica

OhmyGod, I'm sorry. I just uh, thought...

(blows her hair out of her face)

You scared me.

ERNEST

I thought that was you.

Veronica, embarrassed, smiles.

veronica

Hi...

Ernest, all gallant, smiles too, perfect teeth gleaming.

cut to

74 ext-STREET.night

As a Triple-A Truck tows Veronica's ailing auto in the BG, Veronica and Ernest loiter by a neon-lit palmist's window. The words *"See Your Future"* glow behind them.

veronica

Thanks for coming to my rescue.

ernest

Glad I could help.

He and Veronica make eye contact. An awkward, bashful beat.

ernest

Your uh, audition was super by the way.

veronica

(rolls her eyes)

Right.

Ernest gives her a questioning look.

veronica

I sucked. You don't have to lie.

ernest

You're getting a callback.

veronica

Really?

Ernest smiles, nods. As Veronica goes "Wow, I can't believe it" and Ernest goes "Well, believe it", the scene goes temporarily MOS, replaced by

veronica (vo)

"Obvious choice" guys like Ernest normally make me run in the opposite direction. But there was something about him. Something in the way he carried himself and the way he looked at me...

CU - Ernest, bright blue eyes twinkling as he converses with Veronica. We

FREEZEFRAME

veronica (vo)

In retrospect, I see now that Ernest was like a young, handsome, successful version of the dad I never knew. He even resembled the few old photos I'd seen of him.

RESUME 24 FPS ACTION

ernest

- So you need a lift?

veronica

Oh. That's OK, I'll get a cab.

ernest

Don't be silly. Where do you live?

veronica

Out of your way I'm sure. Silverlake.

ernest

I live in Hollywood. Practically on the way.

Veronica hesitates. Ernest flashes his UltraBrite smile again.

ernest

I insist.

Veronica can't refuse.

SOUND PULLUP

veronica (os)

That's it. On the right -

cut to

75 int-RANGE ROVER (MOVING).night

Ernest stops in front of Veronica's building, parks.

veronica

(before he can shut the engine off)

Well, thanks again.

ernest

No problem.

veronica

See you at the callback, I guess.

ernest

Yep.

There’s a thick, uneasy pause - like they’re high school kids on a first date.

veronica

G’night.

She opens the car door.

ernest

Veronica.

She turns, positively exquisite in the car’s interior light.

ernest

It was...nice running into you.

Veronica looks into his deep, shining eyes. Doesn’t know what to say.

veronica

uh huh.

A lingering, loaded beat.

veronica

I better...

ernest

Yeah.

veronica

Seeya.

She exits, stepping out of range of his field of attraction. He watches her.

76 ext-VERONICA’S BUILDING.night

TRACKING SHOT - Veronica heads up the front walk, relieved to be making her escape. As, in the BG, Ernest puts his car in gear, slowly drives away -

veronica (vo)

The next day, DJ called to tell me I got the part. No callback, an offer.

cut to

77 int-LOFT.night

Veronica throws open the door to find Abel and Zed waiting dinner.

ABEL
Where the heck have you been?

ZED
Dinner’s all cold.

ABEL

We're gonna be late for the show.

ZED

What happened?

veronica

(feeling weirdly guilty)

Don't even ask. Let's eat.

Off Veronica's nagging doubt and insecurity:

cut to

78 ext-LA COURTHOUSE.day

MOS - Veronica, on location and in costume as the heroine's supportive sister. Surrounded by bustling CREW MEMBERS, she's being attentively, perhaps over-attentively, directed by Ernest.

veronica (vo)

So I booked my first TV movie. On the set, Ernest was totally on the up-and-up, professional -

Veronica and Ernest make eye contact that lingers a bit too long.

veronica (vo)

That's not to say there weren't undercurrents...

hard cut to

79 int-SUPER RALPHS.night

Veronica, Abel, Zed shop amidst the oversaturated-color products, under glaring fluorescent lights. In the BG, there are Halloween decorations and displays everywhere. Zed, wearing a green, wartnosed witch mask, hookshots a 4-pak of Charmin into the cart which Veronica pushes with "A MATTER OF JUSTICE" on the handlebar, studying her lines.

zed

We need cereal.

veronica

(not looking up from her script)

Get something healthy and not super-fattening.

Zed exits.

abel

(waving his hand in front of her face)

V... uh, hello?

veronica

What?

Abel points to the script, makes a disapproving "sad guy" face.

veronica

I’ve got four scenes to memorize by six a.m. tomorrow.

abel

And it can’t wait till we get home?

veronica

No. It can’t.

Abel backs off.

abel

Change the subject: what d’you feel like doin’ for our exciting One Year Anniversary?

veronica

I’m working.

abel

You’re working on Halloween.

veronica

I’m working every day this week.

Abel sighs, bummed.

veronica

Babe, what do you expect me to do?

Abel says nothing.

veronica

We’ll do something fun this weekend, ‘K?

abel

Whatever.

Abel sulks as Zed reappears, dropping a hot pink box of Crunch Berries into the cart.

abel

Hey, get the little peanut butter balls too.

zed

What? I’m a butler?

abel

No, you’re not smart enough to be a butler.

veronica

(intervening as usual)

Guys.

zed

(mutters)

Get your own fuckin little peanut butter balls.

Abel mocks Zed, imitating him, as Veronica feels a migraine coming on.

veronica

(holding up the Crunch Berries)

This is healthy? Can't we get granola or something?

zed

(nutrition know-it-all)

Granola has the highest sugar-fat content of any breakfast cereal - Worse than Trix, Sugar Smacks, Lucky Charms...

veronica

(fed up, drops the cereal in the cart and pushes it away)

***Forget* it.**

She storms off, leaving Abel and Zed to exchange "what's up with her" looks...

cut to

80 int-CHECKOUT LINE.night

As the CASHIER *BEEPBEEPBEEP* tallies up their purchases, Veronica ignores Abel and Zed, concentrating on her script.

abel

(sotto to Zed)

Must be that time of the month.

Veronica turns, fires them both a look of death. They wither, smile sheepishly. She refocuses on her work.

veronica

(to herself but out loud)

Ever feel stuck in a timewarp - like you're trapped in sophomore year, junior college?

In sync, Abel and Zed trade puzzled glances, look towards Veronica who keeps her back to them.

abel/Zed

No.

The Cashier finishes ringing up their groceries.

cashier

That'll be one hundred thirteen, thirtyseven.

Veronica puts her script down, opens her purse. Looks to Abel and Zed for their share.

It's a ritual. Both guys fish around in their pockets, extract some wadded up bills, loose change, gum wrappers. Zed's also got a guitar pick and a dead battery to contribute to the cause. He shrugs, sad-eyed-boy-in-a-velvet-painting expression on his face.

abel

I'm gettin' paid for the Daft Punk review on Friday.

Veronica sighs wearily. Perfect.

SOUND PULLUP

Stereo SNORING.

cut to

81 int-BEDROOM.night

Veronica awake in the dark, Abel and Zed sawing logs on either side of her. She can't sleep, her mind wandering all over the place.

X-CU - Her introspective eyes glinting in the moonlight...

crossfade to

82 int-BEDROOM.night

Same scenario, Veronica between Abel and Zed, only they're making cozy pillow talk, surrounded by flickering candles.

zed

There's nothing like being naked, in love and under the covers.

veronica

I feel so protected and happy, with the world and all its crazy shit out there.

abel

The secret is to never get out of bed.

Abel kisses her cheek while Zed cuddles up to her other side.

veronica

(into space)

D'you think we're gonna be together forever?

abel

Forever.

zed

Forever and ever.

As they snuggle up for the night...

crossfade back to

81 CU - Veronica gazing at the ceiling
(cont)
HER POV

A constellation of glow-in-the-dark stars peeling off the dingy stucco.

BACK TO SCENE

She looks over at Zed. Then at Abel.

They are losers sort of. They probably never will amount to anything except in their dreams. And she might, in fact, be wasting her life away with them in Slackerville...

But...

But she loves them, with all her heart, no matter how irritating and immature they can be sometimes. And they make each other happy. That's what ultimately counts.

This conclusion finally reached, she can at last settle in to sleep, the guys' snoring sounding more and more like a lullaby...

slow fade to BRIGHT, BOLD BLUE

SOUND PULLUP

A car door *SLAMS* -

cut to

83 ext-STAGE PARKING LOT.magic hour, a week later

Done working for the day, Veronica's about to start her engine when -

TAPTAPTAP!

She jumps, startled to find Ernest rapping on her window. She rolls the glass down.

veronica

You almost gave me a heart attack.

ernest

Sorry.

veronica

I forget something?

ernest

No, I was... It's just tomorrow's your last day of shooting and -

(all sexy schoolboy shy)

I'd really love it if you'd let me take you to dinner.

Veronica's stomach does a somersault.

veronica

Tonight?

ernest

Yeah. Why not?

Veronica swallows.

ernest

(let down, figuring it out)

You have a boyfriend.

veronica

(not really wanting to get into it)

Yeah... I do.

ernest

Well, as friends then.

veronica

I can't...

ernest

C'mon. No strings, no expectations whatsoever.

He smiles, turning up the suave charm.

ernest

I know this place. Best margaritas in town.

Veronica looks into his eyes which glimmer bluer than ever. Doesn't know how to say no...

cut to

84 int-RESTAURANT.night

In the casual but pricey bistro, Veronica and Ernest drink bright red and green margaritas overlooking a spectacular, glittering city view.

ernest

'Course, I don't want to direct television all my life. I'm ambitious. Too ambitious if you ask my ex.

VERONICA

You're...

ERNEST

Six months ago. But making remarkable progress according to the Wise Old Owl.

Veronica looks confused.

ernest

That's my nickname for my therapist, Mary. She says I need to seek out people who don't squelch my

individuality, who give me space to be me - something Rachel never allowed.

(another explanation)

Rachel's my ex. Obviously, huh?

Veronica sips her drink, smiling politely.

ernest

But I'm going on *way* too much about myself - another of my issues according to the Wise Old Owl. Let's hear about you.

veronica

What would you like to know?

ernest

Everything. The whole enchilada. I also love to listen.

Veronica

Well...

As she launches into a judiciously-edited version of her life-story, the scene goes MOS, live sound replaced by

veronica (vo)

OK, so Ernest was a bit "industry", "therapy-speak", "Banana Republic-y". It was kind of a refreshing change to spend time with someone who doesn't collect action figures -

cut to

85 ext-DOG PARK.afternoon

Veronica and Mike walk a fuzzy-sweater-and-earmuff-wearing Steve under a chilly, battleship-grey November sky.

VERONICA (continuing)

- A man, not a "dude", who actually picks up the check for dinner.

mike

Ron, the guy sounds like a complete dork.

veronica

So he's not "cool" or "edgy". Is that a crime?

mike

In some states. Did you kiss him goodnight?

veronica

God no. It's not like that at all.

Steve stops at a bush to lift his leg.

veronica

So what's happening with Alison?

mike

I dumped her last week.

veronica

Really? I thought she was your dream girl.

mike

I did too, till I found out she was as boring as this Ernest guy you're talking about. I liked her better when she was straight and unattainable.

veronica

Ernest is *not* boring. He's sweet...

Veronica goes quiet. Mike's perceptive enough to know something is up.

mike

Don't tell me you're into him too.

veronica

No. It's just... I dunno. Sometimes I wonder what my future is going to be like with Abel and Zed...

mike

Can you imagine you guys - 80 years old and still having three-ways?

veronica

Eeuw.

They walk, Steve stopping to sniff a lamppost.

mike

Forget Ernest. You're already one boyfriend over the legal limit.

veronica

Don't worry. Nothing's gonna happen...

cut to

86 *int-PINK VOID*

veronica

Then, of course, something did.

cut to

87 int-BEDROOM.day

CU - Veronica lying in bed, a thermometer sticking out of her mouth, looking and feeling like shit.

Zed kisses her warm forehead, removes the thermometer.

zed

How y'feelin'?

veronica

Like the scene in *Alien* where that thing jumps out of John Hurt's stomach.

zed

(gently rubs her belly)

Poor baby.

veronica

That feels nice.

zed

(checks the thermometer)

Well, temperature's normal. Need anything else?

veronica

Lots of loving...

As Zed smiles, rubbing her stomach, there's the OS SOUND of the door opening. Abel enters, bearing a bagful of purchases.

abel

How's the patient?

Veronica shrugs listlessly.

zed

Hangin' in.

abel

Probably just that bug goin' around. Don't worry, hon, 24 hours 'n' you'll be good as new.

veronica

Hope so.

abel

Meanwhile -

(unpacking the bag's contents)

7up and crackers - low-sodium, fat-free, of course...

(brandishes *Vogue, Bazaar, Movieline*)

A bit of recreational reading...

(withholding one final surprise)

And...

He pulls out a nauseatingly cute stuffed lamb with a heart around its neck that says *"I Wuv Ewe".*

veronica

Awwwwww...

In her weak, low-resistant condition, the gesture's enough to bring tears to her eyes.

veronica

Baby...

As she kisses him on the cheek, getting all choked up:

SOUND PULLUP

veronica (VO)

None of us knew -

cut to

88 STOCK FOOTAGE - BIO-MICROPHOTOGRAPHY - Like a day-glo painting come to animated life, A CLUSTER OF CELLS ominously divides, redivides, redivides again...

VERONICA (VO)

Mother Nature was rearing her lovely head.

cut to

89 SERIES OF CUS

Hands anxiously tear open an EPT box. Unfold the directions. Inspect the plastic wand. A trickle of pee dribbles over the test area...

X-CU - Veronica's eyes, staring at

X-CU - An ominous double line positive result.

X-CU - Veronica's eyes squeeze shut.

int-BATHROOM.day

In the harsh morning light, Veronica sits on the toilet, the tester in her hand. Wearing her favorite robe over a rhinestone bikini, she bites her lip, filled with all-consuming dread as the insistent *DRIP-DRIP-DRIP* of the leaky faucet gradually turns into -

SOUND PULLUP

The loud murmuring DRONE of a convention.

sloooow crossfade to

90 int-LA CONVENTION CENTER.later that day

HIGH ANGLE - The exultant extravaganza of All-American consumerism known as a car show. From this viewpoint, it looks like thousands of ants milling about a garish, multi-colored pile of sugar.

Amidst the glittering sprawl, Veronica, on a modeling gig, makes like a curvaceous human hood ornament in a red, white and blue rhinestone bikini. Handing out mini-hotdogs and American flags to the leering, polyester-clad PASSERSBY, she hides her humiliation behind a petrified smile.

Slowly, the crowd, lights, smell of Oscar Meyer start to overpower her. As a wave of morning-sickness hits her, she turns to her Floor Manager DON -

veronica

(putting down her tray)

Don, I need a pee break.

Before Don can reply, she runs off -

hard cut to

91 int-LADIES' ROOM.day

Squatting on the cold hard tile, Veronica heaves into the toilet. Feeling utterly alone and miserable, she buries her face in her hands, starts to sob -

But the OS SOUND of a pair of fellow MODELS coming in cuts her crying short.

model 1 (os)

Holy hell. This's even worse than last month's.

model 2 (os)

I hear ya.

Veronica peers under the stall door, sees

HER POV

Two pair of rhinestone-encrusted cowboy boots park in front of the mirrors.

BACK TO SCENE

Veronica prays the intruders will leave sooner rather than later.

model 1 (os)

God. I look like shit. Can I borrow your concealer?

model 2 (os)

Sure. Hey, you know that other girl, Veronica whatshername?

model 1 (os)

The weirdo blonde with the big tits and the turned-up nose? What about her?

model 2 (os)

Well, Tiffani told me that she lives with two guys and *they all three fuck each other.*

model 1 (os)

Eww!

model 2 (os)

Isn't that *disgusting?*

CU - Veronica, feeling sick to her stomach all over again.

model 1 (os)

Those "nice girl" types are always the biggest sluts...

cut to

92 int-LOFT.afternoon

Zed's using his AbSculptor and eating Del Taco on the floor as *"Believe (LFO Remix)" by GUSGUS* pumps on the stereo. MTV plays like kinetic wallpaper in the BG.

Abel shambles in, unshaven, still in boxers, with just-woke-up hair.

abel

(turning down the music)

Cripes. Mind?

Zed barely grunts a reply inbetween reps as Abel *CLINK* fires up his morning cig.

abel

Mail here yet?

Zed

(not missing a rep)

Kitchen.

Abel goes to the counter, sorts through the mail. Finds

HIS POV

A letter from a big New York Publisher.

BACK TO SCENE

He anxiously tears open the envelope. Reads

HIS POV

X-CU - The words: *"Dear Sir: Thank you for submitting your novel. Unfortunately..."*

BACK TO SCENE

Abel sighs, crumpling the letter into a ball. Tosses it, missing the overflowing heap on top of the garbage can.

He flops on the couch, legs splayed. Takes a long drag of his cig. He looks over at Zed who continues exercising with robotlike precision.

abel

Are you fucking kidding with that contraption?

Zed doesn't miss a beat.

abel

You know they're gonna discover those things give you buttbone cancer or something.

Zed snorts.

abel

So what, you see this piece of crap on some infomercial at three a.m. 'n' go "Whoa, I've got flabby abs, where's my credit card number?"

Zed keeps crunching.

zed

Hey, it works.

He eyes his impressive six-pack of tightly coiled stomach muscles. Abel can't help but look too.

zed

Totally isolates your upper and lower abs.

abel

(sneers)

Tsch.

jumpcut to

93 int-LOFT.dusk

Now Abel's AbSculpting as Zed hovers, coaching, while *OMNI TRIO* plays on the stereo.

ZED

OK, tighten.

(touching his tensed stomach)

Feel that in here -

Veronica blows in the door, a coat over her rhinestone outfit, exhausted from her grueling day. Abel and Zed look up.

veronicA

(super cranky)

What is this? The West Hollywood Sports Club?

Abel and Zed are both a bit flustered, almost like they've been caught doing something wrong.

ZED
Hi...

ABEL
Hey...

Veronica drops her stuff by the door, heads for the kitchen.

veronica

(ranting-and-raving)

"So how was your day today, honey?" "Oh, just peachy -"

(yanks open the fridge)

"How 'bout you?"

(reemerges with a DietCoke, doing Zed)

"Awesome. I got lots accomplished. My abs are rock hard."

(pops open her coke)

"And you?"

(doing Abel)

"Oh well, I slept till noon, smoked a bowl 'n' waited for genius inspiration to strike..."

She shuts the stereo off with the remote and collapses onto the couch, kicking off her tassled boots. As she takes a long, cool drink in the sudden, oppressive silence, Abel and Zed just stare at her...

Finally, she exhales wearily. Looks Abel and Zed in the eye.

veronica

We're pregnant, guys.

Off Abel and Zed's blank shock:

sloooow crossfade to

94 int-LOFT.evening

Abel, Veronica, Zed sitting in a row like the see/hear/speak-no-evil monkeys.

zed

(the thought slowly forming)

Well, Bjork has a kid.

Veronica and Abel both glare at him.

zed

(defensive)

She does...

Abel tries to be Mr. Take Charge even though he's more unnerved than any of them.

abel

We just have to remain calm, figure out our options...

veronica

Options? I'm 23 years old, and you guys are 24 going on 17.

zed

My parents had three kids by the time they were our age.

abel

Yeah, and?

zed

I dunno...It might be kinda cool to have a little kid running around.

veronica

"Cool"? Are you high? We're talking about a child here, not a stray puppy.

(beginning to crack)

You guys are so.....

Out of the blue, she starts crying. Abel and Zed look at each other, not quite sure what's going on.

veronica

*You just **don't understand...***

The guys both reach out to comfort her.

ABEL

V...

veronica

(pulling away)

Don't.

She looks at them, her eyes brimming with tears. At her point of no return, she takes a deep breath -

veronica

I've never told anybody about this... But I've already had one abortion.

(tears streaming down)

I was 18... And it was the scariest, most horrible thing I've ever gone through. I swore to myself that I would never, ever do it again...

She looks at Abel and Zed, utterly lost.

veronica

So the easy "option" isn't so easy in this case.

The guys just sit there, completely stunned.

abel

(freaking out)

Let's not freak out here.

zed

Why can't we just have the baby then?

Abel and Veronica look at him.

veronica

Look at this place. Take a good look around at our life. *We don't have any money.* The scale-plus-10 I made on that TV movie is long gone.

zed

We could all work extra jobs--

veronica

Go on welfare, stick the baby in an empty pizzabox for a crib -

(really losing it now)

I was raised by a single hippie mom on food stamps. And my whole life all I wanted was a mom and a dad and a nice house to live in like everybody else. *I want my baby to have* ***a normal life...***

Veronica's sobbing uncontrollably now. Zed's crying too. Abel is white as a sheet.

zed

(sniffling)

So what d'you wanna do?

veronica

I don't know.

Abel and Zed have no idea what to say.

veronica

I just need to get out of here for a couple days. Clear my head...

abel

V.

veronica

Please, if you love me, you'll give me alittle space right now. I really, truly need to do this...

Abel and Zed look into Veronica's miserable, desperate eyes. Realize they don't have any choice.

cut to

95 int-MIKE'S STUDIO.night

Mike, wearing a protective facemask, welds one of her sculptures, GOLDIE playing in the BG. She's interrupted by the ceremonial *GONG* of the OS doorbell.

Putting down her acetylene torch, she lifts her face visor: she's got a Origins black mud mask on.

mike

Coming.

She takes a hit of her cig, goes to get the door.

96 int-FRONT DOOR

She opens it to reveal - Veronica, a total wreck, with a hastily-packed suitcase in each hand.

mike

What the hell happened?

Veronica bursts into tears. As Mike hugs her:

veronica (vo)

So I stayed on Mike's couch for awhile...

cut to

97 *int-PINK VOID*

veronica

'Course, Abel and Zed called every day.

slam cut to

98 ext-SUNSET BLVD.day

Zed, dressed as a taco, at a payphone on a trafficky street corner.

zed

Yeah, I got a job. Uh huh. It blows but - *whuh? I can't--*

intercut with

99 int-MIKE'S APT.day

Veronica on the cordless in a t-shirt and boys underwear, sips coffee from a smiley face mug as Mike studies Art History at the kitchen table while playing sock tug-of-war with Steve. *NIGHTMARES ON WAX* bubbling over the stereo in the BG.

veronica

(loud)

I said that's great.

zed

When're you comin' home?

veronica

Soon.

zed

Ron, we really miss you...

(repeats louder)

I said we miss you alot.

veronica

(sadly)

I miss you too...

now intercut with

100 int-LA WEEKLY OFFICES.evening

As journalistic hubbub ensues in the BG, Abel huddles in his cubicle, trying to preserve a little privacy.

abel

V, it's been almost a week. This has gone from being your way of dealing to your way of not dealing.

intercut with

101 int-MIKE'S APT.evening

Veronica sprawled on the sofa, her shoes off after a long, hard day of auditioning. Mike cooks supper in the BG with *LOCUST* now playing on the stereo.

veronica

I *am* dealing.

(anxious to change the subject)

So, I got an appointment to see the doctor Wednesday.

abel

We wanna go with.

veronica

I don't know. We'll see, OK?

Abel sighs.

veronica

(trying to lighten the mood)

So, anything else new?

abel

(glum)

We got a Christmas tree.

veronica

Yeah?

abel

It’s kinda scrawny, but you wanna come by, help us decorate it?

veronica

um, maybe...

Veronica’s saved by the *BEEP* of call waiting.

veronica

That’s probably for Mike. I’ll talk to you later, ‘K?

abel

V.

(hanging beat...)

I love you.

veronica

(softly)

Love you too.

abel

Bye.

veronica

Bye.

She collects herself then clicks over to the other line.

veronica

Hello? Hi... I’m good, how are you?... Yeah, mhm...

As Veronica looks for a pen and paper, shifting into work mode, the scene goes MOS, live sound replaced by

veronica (vo)

“Coincidentally”, DJ calls to schedule an ADR session for the next day with Guess Who?

cut to

102 int-RERECORDING STUDIO.day

CU - Ernest with a trio of postproduction TEKKIES behind him. Tacky Christmas decorations are pasted up on the console in the BG.

ernest

Perfecto.

Veronica, wearing headphones, stands in front of a wall-sized video-projected image of herself in a scene from the MOW. She smiles at Ernest who’s beaming.

veronica (vo)

Don't ask me what *I was thinking* -

cut to

103 *int-PINK VOID*

veronica

Imean, looking back, I have to blame at least part of it on the funky hormonal chaos going on in my body at the time.

cut to

104 int-RESTAURANT.night

Veronica and Ernest sit by a huge window overlooking the crashing surf of Malibu. Having just relayed the whole sorry saga of her situation, she dabs the corners of her pink-rimmed eyes with her napkin.

veronica

Sorry to dump on you like this...

She blows her nose.

ernest

No, it means alot to me that you trust me. I know how terrible this must be for you.

veronica

(taking a sip of ice water)

It's like no matter what I do, I lose.

ernest

Everything's gonna work out. You'll see. You're only what, 22...

veronica

23.

ernest

Take it from an old geezer like me: my 20s were all about angst and turmoil, but once you hit 30, life levels out. You find your place in the world and gain this weird equilibrium...

veronica

I hope you're right.

ernest

Hey, maybe you ought to have a chat with the Wise Old Owl? I could set you up...

veronica

Oh, uh, I don't know...

ernest

Well, just say the word. If there's anything I can do to help, and I do mean anything.

veronica

Thanks. You've been so unbelievably nice to me.

Veronica wipes her nose, looks up. Ernest is staring at her.

veronica

Don't look at me. My makeup's a mess, isn't it?

Ernest shakes his head, big blue eyes working overtime.

ernest

On the contrary, you look...absolutely radiant.

He makes her feel so special, Veronica can't help but smile.

cut to

105 int-ERNEST'S RANGE ROVER (parked).night

Veronica and Ernest in front of Mike's Googie-style apartment building which is decorated for the season with winking multi-colored lights.

veronica

Thanks again for everything.

ernest

Anytime. You gonna be OK?

veronica

(nodding)

mhm. It's just...alot's happened this week.

ernest

I understand.

Ernest looks at her with those ridiculously sexy eyes again. Their faces have somehow drifted very close together...

ernest

Veronica...

Veronica's like a doe in the headlights. She doesn't know what she's doing and a tender, romantic kiss is rapidly becoming inevitable... But ***BLIPPPPP*** - she's literally saved by the bell (Ernest's carphone).

ernest

(embarrassed)

Oh god.

(shuts off the ringer)

Probably just Andrew.

(explaining)

The agent.

He leans towards Veronica again, ready to pick up where they left off.

ernest

Now where were we?

But Veronica, full of guilt, just wants to get out of there before she does something she really regrets.

veronica

I should go.

ernest

(disappointed but still Mr. Understanding)

OK... Is it alright if I call you tomorrow?

veronica

sure.

Veronica opens the door, again looking picture-perfect in the interior light.

veronica

Night.

ernest

Good night, Veronica.

Veronica gives one last nervous smile, exits. As she *SLAMS* the door, the light goes out on Ernest's lovestruck face. He watches in the dark as Veronica heads up the front walk.

HIS POV

Veronica, cute and tiny at the building's front entrance, waves.

BACK TO SCENE

Ernest waves back. As he starts the car, completely over the moon:

cut to

106 int-MIKE'S STUDIO.night

Veronica, still in her same outfit, sips hot cocoa and munches Oreos, having a post-date recap with Mike who's up late working on a sculpture. *The Mark Clifford Remix of COCTEAU TWINS' "Wax And Wane"* plays in the BG.

mike

Thought you didn't even like the guy that way.

veronica

Neither did I. I don't know anything anymore. I have no clue what I'm doing...

mike

Ron, your biochemistry is completely out of whack. You're not behaving like a rational person. Promise me you're not going to make any more major decisions till your estrogen levels are back to normal.

veronica

But all my life seems to consist of lately is major decisions.

mike

Speaking of which, while you were out with Bachelor Number Three, One and Two both called looking for you.

Veronica bites an Oreo in half.

veronica

I just wanna eat junkfood and live in a cave for the rest of my life--

The OS phone *RINGS.* Veronica freezes, looks at Mike.

mike

What, is that *another* one you haven't told me about yet?

veronica

Do *not* pick up.

RING.

veronica

I'm *definitely* not here.

Mike's machine picks up *CLICKCLICK*. There's a blast of GRRL PUNK and

MIKE AND STEVE (VO, their outgoing message)

Speak. *BARK-BARK* - ***BEEEP.***

ERNEST (VO over phone)

Veronica? It's Ernest.

mike

Oh shit.

ERNEST (VO over phone)

Sorry, I know it's late. Normally, I'd never phone at this hour...

Veronica, torn, doesn't know what to do.

mike

Don't do it, Ron. Do *not.*

veronica

But I feel bad. He knows I'm here...

ERNEST (VO over phone)

It's just, I was on my way home, and I was hoping I might catch you before you went to bed -

Veronica finally gives in, answers. Mike throws up her hands.

veronica

(warily)

Ernest?

intercut with

107 int-RANGE ROVER (moving).night

Ernest behind the wheel, on his carphone.

ernest

Veronica. Gosh, I didn't wake you, did I?

back to

Veronica's got this pained expression on her face as Mike hovers close in the BG trying to listen in.

veronica

No, Mike and I were just...talking.

ernest

Sweet, 'cuz I was thinking... You seem like you could use a vacation.

veronica

That's an understatement.

ernest

Well, what're you doing this weekend? I've got this condo in Maui -

Veronica goes white; Mike's mouth drops open.

veronica

Oh gee, Ernest, I--

ernest

Before you say no, let me assure you that my intentions are nothing less than noble. You'd have your own bedroom, bathroom, we'd go first class on my frequent flyer miles...

Mike frantically jumps up and down, shaking her head.

veronica

It sounds incredible but--

ernest

There's a pool, jacuzzi, it's right on the water with killer views... And the sunsets... Have you ever seen a Maui sunset?

veronica

No, I haven't. But there's just no way I--

ernest

Veronica, please. You'd be doing *me* a favor. I need this mini-getaway almost as badly as you do.

Veronica sighs as Mike mouths the words "Do Not Do It" over and over -

ernest

C'mon.

(smiles, Prince Fucking Charming)

Let me take you away from all this.

Veronica bites her lip, unable to get the image of palm trees and white sandy beaches out of her mind...

veronica (vo)

Alright, I was weak. Desperate. Not thinking straight. Pregnant... At the end of my rope...

SOUND PULLUP

The *THUNDERING WHINE* of a JET ENGINE taking off...

cut to

108 STOCK SHOT - a 747 obscuring the sky as it ZOOMS overhead with a deafening *ROAR.*

cut to

109 ext-BEACH.day

OVERHEAD - Veronica and Ernest side-by-side on matching towels, sipping coconut juice under the tropica sun. In the BG, the tide gently laps the shore, like a lullaby.

veronica

I feel *so* guilty.

ernest

Why? You deserve to be pampered. Enjoy it.

veronica

I've never experienced anything like this in my life. I didn't think I had it in me to be this decadent.

ernest

It ain't so bad, eh?

veronica

(breaking out in a grin)

Nope.

SOUND PULLUP

BONGO-HEAVY HULA MUSIC FADES UP as we

cut to

110 SERIES OF SHOTS

DANCERS gyrate wildly at a tourist-packed luau, putting on a show for Veronica and Ernest.

MUSIC CONTINUES OVER a quick-cut MONTAGE of Veronica and Ernest happily frolicking like they're in a Club Med commercial - shopping for souvenirs, swimming, walking arm-in-arm into a magnificent sunset...

veronica (VO)

So, for 72 hours, I left my troubles behind. I felt reborn, like a completely new person...

cut to

111 ext-ERNEST'S CONDO TERRACE.night

Veronica and Ernest relax in the jacuzzi, looking out at a staggering, panoramic view of the shore. The stars twinkle unnaturally bright against the velvety black sky.

veronica

(inhaling the delicious sea air)

Well, tomorrow, it's back to reality.

ernest

Please, don't remind me.

veronica

I can't believe how fast the weekend went.

ernest

I know.

veronica

Thank you so much for bringing me here. It's been like a dream. Everything's so...fancy. Even my bedsheets are beautiful.

ernest

It doesn't have to end, y'know.

His piercing blue eyes meet hers as he holds her face like it's a precious sculpture.

ERNEST

Please say we'll do this again.

Veronica is unable to speak... Ernest leans forward, kisses her with heartbreaking sincerity and she can't help but feel a deep, stirring *something* - if not love, the most soulful affection possible.

ernest

I've been wanting to do that since the first day we met.

veronica

(full of regret and confusion)

Ernest...

ernest

I know, I shouldn't have... I'm sorry. I can't help myself.

veronica

I think I better go to bed.

ernest

Yeah.

Veronica gets out of the jacuzzi, looks down at Ernest's gentle, adoring face.

veronica

See you in the morning.

ernest

uh huh...

Veronica, feeling bad, slowly walks away, leaving Ernest alone in the hot tub. As he stares pensively out at the serene, vast Pacific...

cut to

112 int-CONDO BEDROOM.night

Sitting on the edge of the bed, Veronica takes a dogeared photo out of her purse.

INSERT CU - The snapshot of her, Abel, Zed goofing in the park, a sad reminder of happier days that seem very, very long ago.

Veronica exhales, filled with conflicting emotions. She flops onto the cool, luxurious sheets, stares into space, dead-on into CAMERA. Off her hopelessly perplexed face:

VERONICA (VO)

I knew the trip was a mistake, but can you blame me for just wanting to get away from it all?

slow crossfade to

113 int-747 (moving).the next day

In first class, flying home. Veronica, trying to get alittle rest after her sleepless night, opens her eyes to find Ernest watching her, smiling. She smiles back tightly, pretends to fall back asleep...

veronica (vo)

Though of course, there was no escape. My problems were waiting for me back home and all I'd managed to do was make things even more complicated and confusing than ever...

smash cut to

114 ***BOOM!*** THUNDER. A BOLT OF LIGHTNING ignites the stormy night sky.

115 int-LOFT.night

Abel drinks wine, tensely smokes on the sofa as Zed paces around the apartment (which has been noticably tidied up). *AUTECHRE* plays over the stereo, adding an edgy BG ambience. As advertised, a spindly Christmas tree sits pathetically off in the corner, blinking more or less in time to the music.

The OS SOUND of keys in the lock, the door opening. Abel and Zed both turn

THEIR POV

Veronica coming in.

veronica

Lovely night.

(doffs her soggy raincoat)

Sorry I'm late.

BACK TO SCENE

Zed gazes at Veronica like she's some vision his lovesick imagination has conjured up. Abel just stares.

ZED

Hi....

ABEL

Hey.

Veronica enters the room.

zed

You uh, want some wine?

Zed sits on the couch opposite Abel as Veronica hovers noncommital by the armrest.

veronica

Can't.

(points to her belly)

zed

Oh uh, right. Sorry.

abel

So, you saw the doctor?

veronica

Yeah. She says I'm about 8 weeks. Which leaves us about a month to...figure things out.

zed

Well, you look good. Y'feelin' OK?

veronica

mhm...

They stew in uncomfortable silence like they're three strangers.

veronica

So I s'pose you're wondering why I wanted to come over tonight.

abel

You could say inquiring minds wanna know, yeah.

Veronica inhales, mustering all her courage.

veronica

Remember how when we started going out we said we'd always be honest with each other, no matter what? Well, I know how hard this has been for both of you. And I wish I could say that I've got everything worked out 'n' that I'm coming back home, but things are even more fucked up now than before...

ABEL

(sighs)
Great.

ZED
(leaning forward)
Ron, we just wanna help. Why won't you let us?

veronica

Because you can't. Because *you guys are my problem.*

Abel and Zed look at Veronica as her eyes fill with tears.

veronica

Because I love you both more than anything. You make me happier than I've ever been. But this baby, this huge responsibility that's been thrust upon me, it's made me realize that it's not all about love. It's made me feel like maybe you guys aren't the ones for me even though I really, really want you to be...

Veronica sits, crying. Abel and Zed are totally devastated.

abel

Just what are you saying, V? Are you dumping us?

veronica

No. Yes. I *don't know* -

(starts to sob)

I just think we should...

(forcing herself to say the words)

See what it’s like living apart...

Zed’s now bawling like a baby. Abel looks like something inside him has died.

abel

(almost too calm)

One question.

Veronica

(wipes her eyes)

What?

abel

Is there someone else?

A long, awful silence fills the room. Finally, Veronica slowly nods.

veronica

(murmuring)

Ernest.

Abel grows furious; Zed’s just puzzled.

zed

Ernest? Who’s Ernest?

abel

The director guy.

zed

What director guy?

veronica

I haven’t slept with him or anything.

Abel

*I cannot **believe** this...*

He takes a big gulp of wine, glares at Veronica as the light bulb in Zed’s head finally switches on.

zed

Him?!

Veronica and Abel both give him a look, then Abel goes off:

abel

We've been sitting here, with our thumbs up our asses, worried sick about you like stupid idiots - While you're off behind our backs, fucking some cheesebag scumsucker--

veronica

I ***told*** you *I didn't sleep with him.*

Abel, without warning, suddenly hurls his glass across the room. It SHATTERS against the wall.

abel

LIAR!

Veronica, shaken by Abel's outburst, looks him dead in the eye.

veronica

I'm. Not. Lying.

abel

Know what, Veronica? I don't believe you.

veronica

I'm ***telling the truth...***

Veronica starts crying again as the floodgates of weeks of pent-up emotion burst wide open.

zed

(to Abel)

Man, now look what you--

(reaching out to Veronica)

Ron...

Veronica, falling apart, turns to leave.

zed

Ron.

He chases after Veronica who's fumbling with her coat.

abel

Let her go.

Zed grabs Veronica by the arm.

abel

LET HER ***GO!***

veronica

(tears streaming)

You heard him.

She looks into Zed's glistening eyes. It breaks her heart wide open.

zed

Please don't leave...

veronica

(she has no choice)

I'm sorry.

She tears herself away, runs off, leaving Abel and Zed alone in the cold, gloomy apartment.

SOUND PULLUP

As lightning *CRACKS* and thunder *ROARS:*

cut to

116 ext-APT BUILDING.night

SHAKY HANDHELD - Veronica runs through the torrential rain, Christmas lights blurry multi-colored dots in the BG. Her hair a straggly mop, makeup running down her face, she's a godforsaken mess.

veronica (vo)

Then, in a classic example of rash stupidity -

cut to

117 ext-HOLLYWOOD HILLS HOUSE.night

The front door, decorated with a fancy wreath, opens, revealing Ernest in a luxurious, white robe.

REVERSE ANGLE - Veronica, shivering on the doorstep, soaked to the bone.

Ernest gazes at her, overflowing with compassion.

Veronica hugs him tight as he offers all the comfort his strong arms can muster.

veronica (vo)

So I slept at Ernest's for the first time -

As the door closes behind them...

sloooow fade to INDIGO

hard cut to

118 *int-PINK VOID*

veronica

Sex never even came up. He just held me and told me not to worry, that he was gonna take care of everything -

cut to

119 SERIES OF SHOTS

veronica (vo)

The next couple weeks were this surreal blur. Ernest was like Superman, carrying me over Metropolis, not letting my feet touch the ground...

MOS - Ernest serving Veronica breakfast in bed, taking her shopping at Barneys, helping her out of the car as they valet-park at a chichi restaurant, them sailing in the Marina, getting his-n-her massages at BurkeWilliams...

veronica (vo)

He showed me a world that I never knew existed. As long as we were together, I felt like I did during our trip to Hawaii -

cut to

120 *int-PINK VOID*

VERONICA

Numb. The pain went away, like someone'd injected novocaine into my heart.

cut to

121 ext-ERNEST'S BALCONY.night

END MONTAGE - Veronica and Ernest waltz in the moonlight. Completely head-over-heels, he kisses her forehead as she tries not to look uneasy...

veronica (vo)

I felt safe with Ernest. Like everything was gonna be OK...

cut to

122 int-BEVERLY HOT SPRINGS.afternoon

Veronica and Mike soak in the steamy water, conversing in hushed whispers in the monasterylike silence as towel-clad OLD LADIES pad by in the BG.

mike

So you've been spending alot of time at Prince Charming's Castle.

veronica

Yeah. It's unreal. He has this housekeeper who actually gets mad if you try to clean up after yourself.

mike

I could get used to that.

Veronica smiles, feeling a tad guilty.

mike

Hey, reality sucks. Why bother returning to it?

veronica

(doesn't really wanna talk about it but...)

Speaking of which.

mike

(knows)

Yeah.

veronica

Have either of them?

mike

Is the sky brown? Zed called me the other day just to weep into the phone.

veronica

(holds up her hand)

Don’t tell me anymore.

She sighs, leans her head back against the edge of the pool.

veronica

What am I supposed to do?

mike

Are you 100% broken up, over, done with them?

veronica

Yes. Well... Pretty much...

Mike gives her a look.

veronica

(firm)

Yes.

mike

Then do nothing. Avoid all contact and let the wounds heal. You have to make a clean break.

veronica

I just feel like we need time to get over each other and move on. Imean, I’m just beginning to get my life straightened out...

She trails off into an introspective ether. Mike can tell something’s up.

mike

Ron, why am I getting a funny feeling?

Veronica looks at her, bites her lip.

veronica

Promise you won't tell anyone. *Especially* Abel and Zed.

mike

Hi. Spit it out, please.

Veronica takes a deep breath.

veronica

Ernest wants me to move in with him.

Mike arches one eyebrow.

mike

You don't say.

veronica

And we... actually, me mainly... I've, um, decided to keep the baby.

mike

(numb shock)

You're kidding.

Veronica looks at her like "no, I'm not...".

mike

Ron, I don't mean to nitpick but, Abel and Zed, one of 'em anyway, is the kid's father.

veronica

I know. I just... You've gotta trust me on this. It's what's best for everyone.

Mike just stares at her then suddenly *SCREAMS* at the top of her lungs, causing every head in the place to turn.

As the echoing reverberations die down:

mike

Sorry. Just needed to get that out.

Veronica's nonplussed and embarrassed but she can't help smiling.

mike

I pray to God you know what you're doing.

Off Veronica's not very convincing conviction:

cut to

123 *int-PINK VOID*

veronica

Of course, I had no clue.

cut to

124 int-EDITING SUITE.evening

MOS - Ernest, Veronica (looking subtly different, her hair and style a shade more yupscale than before) and an EDITOR watch takes of her in-MOW-character on a glowing AVID screen. A tiny stuffed Santa sits on one monitor, a small minora on the other.

veronica (vo)

Living with Ernest turned out to be frighteningly easy. Drama-free.

cut to

125 int-DOCTOR'S OFFICE.day

MOS - Veronica and Ernest get all excited seeing, for the first time, her baby's shape on the UltraSound monitor screen.

veronica (vo)

He was considerate, thoughtful, loving... Plus he even -

cut to

126 int-ERNEST'S BATHROOM.night

Ernest, in designer pajamas, finishes taking his bedtime pee. Remembers to -

CLUNK - Put the toilet seat back down when he's done.

veronica (vo)

What can I say? Ernest was -

cut to

127 *int-PINK VOID*

veronica

Perfect.

As the awkward weirdness of that word clouds her face:

cut to

128 int-ERNEST'S HOUSE - BATHROOM.night

X-CU - Ernest removes his blue-tinted contact lenses, getting ready to turn in.

ernest

Still feeling nauseous, sweetheart?

int-BEDROOM

Veronica, sitting up in bed, puts aside her book entitled "BEATING THE PREGNANCY BLUES".

veronica

Everyone keeps saying this morning sickness thing will pass but...

Ernest, finished putting on his eye cream, switches off the bathroom light and, donning his Paul Smith glasses, enters the bedroom.

ernest

Want some more ginger snaps?

veronica

Yeah, can you...?

Ernest smiles.

ernest

Where are they?

veronica

In my purse I think.

Ernest fetches her bag from the dresser.

veronica

Hopefully the next six months aren't gonna be like this.

Ernest sits on the bed, starts foraging through her handbag.

ernest

Well, supposedly the second trimester...

(voice trails off)

veronica

What?

ernest

I don't mean to snoop but...

He pulls from her purse

INSERT CU - The snapshot of her all happy and frolicking with Abel and Zed.

Veronica goes silent.

ernest

Is that...?

Veronica nods solemnly. The wounded look on Ernest's face makes her feel awful.

veronica

(leaning forward)

Don't be upset. It's just an old picture. I forgot it was even in there.

Ernest is still bummed.

veronica

Here.

She takes the photo, crumples it up, tosses it in the trashcan next to the bed.

veronica

Better?

Ernest looks at her, eyes glistening behind his glasses.

ernest

It’s just...I don’t know how to compete with them.

veronica

You aren’t competing. You’re in an entirely different league.

ernest

Do you mean that, Veronica?

Veronica kisses him sweetly, nods.

ernest

You make me so happy. Happier than I’ve ever been.

veronica

You make me happy too.

ernest

That’s good ‘cuz there’s nothing worse than a relationship in which one person is more in love than the other...

veronica

(hiding guilt)

That according to the Wise Old Owl?

ernest

How’d you know?

Ernest beams, caresses her porcelain cheek.

ernest

Veronica, do you believe in Destiny?

Veronica

(the question making her nervous)

I guess... Why?

ernest

Because I believe everything happens for a reason. Like we were meant to meet up that night your car broke down.

Ernest's behavior is making Veronica more than alittle tense.

veronica

Yeah...

ernest

Close your eyes a sec.

veronica

This isn't going to be kinky, is it?

ernest

No. Close.

She reluctantly does. Hears Ernest open the OS nightstand...

ernest

OK. Now open.

Veronica opens her eyes. Her face goes slack.

Ernest is kneeling beside her, holding *a spectacular, glittering diamond ring.* He takes off his glasses, puts them on the nightstand.

ernest

I know this is corny and old-fashioned, but you've made me realize that there's more to life than a successful career and a truckload of Emmys -

Veronica doesn't know what to say.

ernest

I want to spend the rest of my life with you. And I want your baby to have a real mother and father -

He takes Veronica's hand.

ernest

I was going to wait till Christmas Eve, but -

His fathomless eyes overflow with emotion.

ernest

Veronica, will you marry me?

Off Veronica's completely bewildered expression:

smash cut to

129 CU - Mike spitting out a mouthful of Jamba Juice, choking.

int-MIKE'S APT.afternoon

Veronica hands Mike a paper towel, pats her back as she sputters and coughs with Steve jumping up and down, barking excitedly at her feet. *SPEEDY J* plays over the stereo in the apartment which has been festively decorated for the holidays.

veronica

Mike, you OK? Jeez...

mike

(inbetween gasps)

You... can't go through with it... I'm - *Steve!* - I'm not gonna let you ruin your life like this - *Steve, shush!*

veronica

(convincing herself)

Mike, I want my baby to have what I never did. For once in my life, I'm doing the responsible thing.

Mike, scooping Steve up in her arms, is suddenly in dire need of a cigarette.

mike

Even if it means ball-and-chaining yourself to someone you don't even love. Or barely know for that matter - Where *are* my frickin' cigarettes??

veronica

I *do* love Ernest.

mike

Oh really.

(finally - Eureka! - finds her smokes)

veronica

It's a different kind of love, that's all...

Mike fires up, takes a badly-needed drag.

mike

Ron, as your best friend in the whole world, I'm begging you to rethink this.

veronica

Too late. Wedding's midnight, New Year's Eve, at the Mondrian.

Mike stops. Smoke pours out of her open mouth.

mike

As in *this* New Year's Eve? As in *two weeks from now?*

Veronica nods.

mike

You’re not serious.

veronica

Dead. And if you truly are my best friend, you’ll show your support by being there.

Veronica’s mind is made up: it’s now a matter of her own stubborn will.

mike

Have you told your mom?

veronica

I’m gonna wait till after, then tell her Ernest and I eloped.

mike

Why?

veronica

‘Cuz I don’t feel like dealing.

mike

Segue to: remember Abel and Zed? Y’know, the sperm donors... What about them?

Veronica closes up like a clam.

mike

You’ve gotta tell them. You owe them that much.

veronica

(her calm facade starting to crumble)

I just can’t see them now. It’s too painful still. I need to wait till we’re all in a better place.

mike

When? The kid’s eighteenth birthday?

veronica

(tears coming now)

What do you expect me to do?? I have to think about what’s best for my baby - not what I want, not what Abel and Zed want... Don’t you understand? *I have no choice...*

She crumples into Mike’s arms, crying. As Mike comfort her as best she can (without crushing Steve):

mike

Oh Ron...

Veronica sniffles, trying to compose herself.

veronica

Sorry.

mike

Don’t worry. No matter what happens, I’ll back you up - me and Steve, we’re both backing you up.

Veronica manages a tiny smile.

mike

You can count on us.

(to Steve)

Right?

Steve cocks his head in agreement. Off Mike looking *pretty* sure she can keep her promise...

fade to DEEP VIOLET

SOUND PULLUP

DICK CLARK (OS)

Here we are, New York City’s Times Square...

hard cut to

130 TV - DICK on the tube with raucous NYC REVELLERS partying in the BG.

dick clark

Just one hour away from ringing in a Brand New Year...

abel/zed (os)

Fuck you.

130A int-LOFT.night

Abel and Zed, unshaven, disheveled, slouch on the couch surrounded by garbage and junkfood. Drowning their sorrows with cheap champagne.

As Abel zaps Dick into oblivion with the remote -

130B TV - CHANNEL CHANGES to another annoyingly exuberant New Years Bash, hosted by another irksome NEWSCASTER.

newscaster

Yes, folks, the excitement level is rapidly rising here--

abel/zed

(zapping again)

Fuck you too.

130C TV - CHANNEL CHANGES again to some GRADE-Z MONSTER MOVIE featuring mindless destruction and stuff blowing up.

abel/zed

That’s more like it.

130D They *CLINK* their bottles of Andre together, take swigs. Sinking into the couch, they let the mayhem flickering onscreen do its brain-anesthetizing work.

zed

How many more bottles of this we got?

abel

(belches)

Plenty. I lifted a whole case from my office party.

zed

Right on.

They continue vegetating in the TV's irradiated glow.

zed

Hey Abel.

abel

Whut?

zed

D'you think next year's gonna be any improvement over this one?

Abel looks Zed in the eye.

abel

Nope.

He takes another drink.

zed

That's depressing.

abel

You asked.

They both stare at the TV.

130E TV - More EXPLOSIONS, HERDS OF PEOPLE dying.

130F Abel yawns.

zed

Whaddya think Veronica's doing right now?

abel

I don't wanna know.

zed

Don’t you ever think about it?

abel

Nope.

zed

I do.

abel

That’s too bad for you.

As they keep watching TV, Zed’s mind wanders down an all-too-familiar, sentimental path. Tears start forming in his eyes...

zed

I miss her.

abel

Ah, jeez.

zed

I do.

abel

Well, drink some more.

Zed does - it doesn’t help.

abel

Look. Veronica dumped us. She doesn’t love us anymore. Maybe she never did.

zed

(waterworks really flowing now)

How can you say that??

abel

Alright, whatever. It didn’t work out the way we wanted it to. But ultimately, it was her choice to leave and she’s not coming back. So now it’s up to us to accept that and get on with our lives.

zed

(bawling)

*But it’s so **hard**...*

Abel has no choice but to give Zed a consoling hug.

abel

I know.

Zed cries his eyes out. As Abel struggles to stay dry-eyed himself:

abel

(softly, almost to himself)

I miss her too.

SOUND PULLUP

A beyond cheesy COVER BAND version of *"I Will Always Love You"* swells on the soundtrack as we

cut to

131 CU - A PLASTIC BRIDE AND GROOM perched atop a wedding cake like a pair of doomed explorers on a snow white glacier.

cut to

ext-MONDRIAN HOTEL - POOLSIDE.night

The BAND, dressed-in-white, complete with HARPIST, continues playing as GUESTS fill the patio which has been decorated to the lavish wedding extravaganza/ Happy New Year hilt. Everyone is congratulating the beaming Ernest who looks dapper and nervous in his Donna Karan tux.

cut to

132 int-HOTEL ROOM.night

Veronica, drop-dead in her wedding dress, is gazing at

INSERT CU - In her hand, the retrieved-from-the-trash, wrinkled SNAPSHOT of her, Abel and Zed.

Staring at the photo, she feels a lead bowling ball in the pit of her stomach. As the OS SOUND of the unlocking door causes her to stash the picture back in her purse:

mike (os)

I dunno about you but my girdle is killing me.

Mike enters, wearing a completely out-of-character, frilly maid-of-honor outfit, carrying a tuxedo-clad Steve in her arms.

veronica

(pretending to search her purse)

Got any Tylenol?

mike

(pulls some out of her matching handbag)

Headache?

veronica

(taking three pills from Mike's palm)

Monster.

mike

(takes a couple for herself)

I've been popping these like candy too.

Veronica tries knocking the pills back, drops them on the floor.

veronica

Oh--

She bends to retrieve the pills which roll under the bed. Tripping over her gown, she knocks over the nightstand lamp ***CRAAASH!***

veronica

Oh *jeez*--

mike

(bending to help)

Here let me--

Veronica turns accidentally CLUNKING heads with Mike, as Steve jumps to the ground with a *YELP.*

veronica/mike

OW!

Veronica plops down on the floor and, frustrated, exasperated, hyper-emotional on this most emotional of days, bursts into tears.

mike

Oh. Ron...

As Mike consoles her, Veronica cries on her shoulder.

veronica

I'm such a fuckup. I make a mess of *everything*...

mike

Let it all out. Go ahead...

veronica

I can't do it, Mike. I can't go through with it... Ernest is *so amazing...* He'll make the *best* husband and father... *But I just can't do it...*

Mike looks at her, doesn't know what to say or do.

veronica

(bawling)

And I miss Abel and Zed...

mike

Oh, Ron.

veronica

Mike, what am I gonna do???? This is ***the worst day of my life....***

Mike, mind going a mile a minute, has no idea. They're interrupted by a sudden *OS KNOCKING* at the door.

intercut with

133 int-HOTEL CORRIDOR

Ernest at the door.

ERnest

Veronica? Everything alright in there?

Veronica and Mike exchange panicked looks.

mike

Fine. Go away.

ernest

Veronica? What's going on in there? Unlock the door.

mike

We're just having a little girltalk -

veronica

Ernest, you're not supposed to see me before the wedding. It's bad luck -

ernest

I know, honey. I just wanted to tell you: the network just called Andrew. They love the picture so much they're holding it for February sweeps. Isn't that great?

veronica

Uh...Yeah.

ernest

Veronica, are you sure you're alright?

veronica

I'm fine, Ernest. Everything's fine.

ernest

You're not getting cold feet now, are you?

veronica

No, Ernest. Of course not.

Ernest smiles, 98% reassured.

ernest

Well, you just holler if you need anything, 'K?

veronica

OK.

Ernest, somewhat reluctantly, exits.

132 Veronica and Mike breath a sigh of relief.
(cont)

MIKE

Whew.

veronica

(recomposing herself)

God. Look at me.

She goes over to the mirror. Mike just stares at her as she checks out her reflection.

veronica

(re: her messed up state)

Wow.

She opens her makeup bag.

mike

Uh, Ron. What are we doing?

veronica

(starts reapplying her makeup)

That's fairly obvious, isn't it?

mike

Let me rephrase that: What's with the *Invasion of The Body Snatchers* routine?

veronica

I'm sorry for falling apart before. But it's pretty clear that we're way past the point of no return here, isn't it?

mike

Ever heard the expression "Better late than never"?

veronica

What about "You've made your bed, now lie in it"?

mike

Think it's "you've dug your grave".

Mike wins. But it doesn't matter anymore.

veronica

Mike. I'm OK now. Really. I just lost it for a second. Wedding day jitters, that's all.

mike

What if the situation was reversed and you were in my shoes?

veronica

I don't think unplanned pregnancies are a big problem for you.

mike

Let's just say.

veronica

(looks her in the eye)

I'd hope that I could be as good and true a friend as you've been to me through all this.

This sudden, unexpected expression of genuine feeling moves the both of them.

mike

Fair enough.

veronica

Now get out of here before I start crying all over again.

Mike acquiesces. Bends, scoops Steve up in her arms.

veronica

Uh, Mike?

Mike pauses.

veronica

Thanks. For everything.

She and Mike smile, overflowing with unspoken emotion. Finally, Mike turns, slowly exits, leaving Veronica alone to face her impending moment of truth. Off her grave uncertainty...

cut to

134 int-HOTEL CORRIDOR

Mike, holding Steve in her arms, steps into the hall. Goes to balcony, looks down at

134A HER BIRDSEYE POV

From the third floor, Ernest continues greeting the incoming flow of Guests below.

134B BACK TO SCENE

Mike looks at Steve who's inquisitively watching her.

mike

So what do *you* say?

steve

YIP.

mike

Even if it pisses Veronica off?

steve

YIP YIP.

mike

You're right. It's for her own good.

cut to

135 int-HOTEL PHONE BOOTH.night

Mike, with Steve in tow, grabs the phone. Furtively dials...

intercut with

136 int-LOFT.night

RING.

TV - MONSTER MOVIE MAYHEM continues. More mass annihilation...

RING.

The coffee table littered with a half dozen empty champagne bottles...

back to

mike

(chewing her lip)

C'mon...

RING.

The sofa formerly inhabited by Abel and Zed, now vacant...

RING - CLICK CLICK

X-CU - The old Panasonic answering machine picks up.

ABEL/ZED (VO, their outgoing message)

Whaddayawant? ***BEEEEP.***

MIKE (VO over phone)

Shit. Where are you guys? Pick up the phone...

back to

MIKE

Rrrrrrhh! Are you kidding? You *must* be there...

back to

CAMERA SEARCHES the mysteriously empty loft, TRACKING *Shining*-style towards the illuminated bathroom...

MIKE (VO over phone)

Hello, it's an *emergency,* dickheads...

137 int-BATHROOM.night

CAMERA FINALLY FINDS Zed driving the porcelain bus, severely, with Abel at his side, propping him up.

abel

One more for the gipper...

Zed tosses more cookies.

back to

mike

OK. I'm only going to ask one more time, politely, then you loafpans can spend a pleasant forever in oblivion...

PICK UP THE GODDAMN MOTHERBLEEPIN' PHONE!!!

back to

Inbetween Zed's agonized moans, Abel finally hears Mike's OS exhortations.

abel

(to the zombielike Zed)

Uh... don't move.

He lets go of Zed's head which lands *THUD* on the bowl. Goes staggering off towards -

MIKE (VO over phone)

You guys are pathetic -

138 int-LOFT.night

Abel, quite blitzed himself, searches for the cordless.

MIKE (VO over phone)

Don’t know why I even bothered -

Abel can’t find the phone anywhere.

abel

Wait. *Wait,* goddamnit...

MIKE (VO over phone)

Knowing you tragic losers, you’re probably at some party, piss drunk, trying to get laid -

Abel flips out with frantic frustration, hurls the sofa cushions across the room.

abel

FUCK ME!!!

MIKE (VO over phone)

(about to hang up)

Ron’s probably better off without the two of you after all--

INSERT CU - The cordless, tucked in the crack of the sofa frame...

abel

(frantically diving for it)

Wait! *WAIT!!!* Mike!

mike

Well, pull my daisy. Finally.

abel

What? What’s going on??

mike

For starters, Veronica’s getting married to the Smurf in approximately -

(checks her watch)

Fiftythree minutes--

Abel goes pale.

MIKE (VO over phone)

So if you and Tarzan want one last shot--

abel

WHERE IS SHE??!

cut to

139 int-BATHROOM.night

Zed's slipped into the toilet and is in the midst of drowning as Abel bursts in.

abel

Oh *shit!*

He grabs Zed by his crewcut, yanks his face out of the water.

zed

(sputters, sprays like a fish)

WH?? WHA???

Abel slaps him a couple times, grabs him by his ears.

zed

OW!...

abel

Zed. *Zed, wake up!*

zed

wha...? Lemme... Gotta rest....

abel

It's Veronica. *Veronica,* man -

Zed blinks like a confused turtle.

abel

*Veronica's getting **married** and we've gotta stop her!*

Zed collapses to the ground. Abel rolls his eyes, bends to help him.

zed

(struggling to stand)

What're you talking about, dude?

abel

I said...Forget it. There's no time to explain. We have to...

He gets Zed on his feet again and catches the sorry sight of the two of them in the mirror.

abel

Oh *jeez.*

Zed belches, a long, low croaker.

abel

(catching a whiff of his barfy stench)

Ugh.

He looks over at the clock on the wall.

HIS POV

The hands read ten minutes past eleven.

BACK TO SCENE

He grabs Zed by the shoulders.

abel

Listen to me.

Zed does his best to focus his blurry senses.

abel

Do you love Veronica?

zed

(starts crying again)

Yes.

abel

Then we have a fucking *miracle* to perform.

cut to

140 SERIES OF SHOTS

As *BT's "Loving You More (Rabbit In The Moon Remix)"* CRANKS, an MTV-flashy MONTAGE of carefully-composed IMAGES calvacades by:

CU - Abel turning on the shower -

Abel helping Zed undress while getting out of his own clothes -

Abel holding Zed up under the hot shower -

Zed brushing his teeth as Abel shaves -

Vice versa -

Applying deodorant: Abel roll-on, Zed spray -

Hair combing -

Getting dressed -

Sprinting out the door -

141 ext-APT BUILDING.night

Hopping on Abel's motorcycle -

142 ext-HOLLYWOOD BLVD.night

Crazily zigzagging through the New Year's Eve traffic clog, risking life and limb - Then SUDDENLY, as the engine sputters and the MUSIC peters out with it:

INSERT CU - The fuel gauge: Out of gas.

Abel, pissed, whacks the handlebar.

ABEL

SHIT!

He and Zed exchange wildeyed looks as ANGRY DRUNK MOTORISTS BLARE their horns. They're stranded, frantic, as the scene quickly turns into cacophonous chaos -

But then... A HUGE, ANCIENT, GOLD LINCOLN lumbers up beside them. Its tinted windows slowly power down to reveal -

The PERSIAN WIZARD CASHIER who gave Veronica the lucky pennies.

wizard cashier

You young men need a lift?

As Abel and Zed trade relieved looks and pile into the car, MUSIC starting up again:

cut to

143 ext-MONDRIAN PARKING LOT.night

SCREECH! The Lincoln jerks to a halt in the driveway which is a sea of valet-parked BMWs and Lexi. As Abel and Zed leap out of the car (the MUSIC now internally sourced over the car radio):

abel/ZED

Thanks!

As the smilng Wizard Cashier waves goodbye and drives away:

mike (os)

Well, it's about frickin' time.

Abel and Zed turn, find Mike running towards them with Steve in her arms.

mike

What took you jokers so long?

Abel and Zed, barely managing their sudden sobriety, repress champagne burps.

mike

(holding up a keycard)

Suite 333.

cut to

144 int-HOTEL LOBBY.night

Mike, with Steve, shoves Abel and Zed into the elevator, punches the UP button.

mike

Hurry! Hurry, dufuses, it's almost midnight!

The doors close on the hapless duo who are all straightening their hair and shit, leaving Mike to worry and be anxious for about half a second. Then ***PING*** the elevator next door slides open -

veronica

There you are. C'mon, everyone's waiting...

As she drags Mike away before she can even stammer a response:

cut to

145 int-HOTEL CORRIDOR.night

PING. The elevator opens and Abel and Zed race to Suite 333. As Abel fumbles with the card in the lock -

zed

Hurry up, dude!

X-CU - The red light not turning green. Not turning green...

abel

I am. Chill--!

X-CU - Finally green.

They burst in the door.

abel/zed

VERONICA!--

146 int-HOTEL ROOM

THEIR POV

Manically ZIP-PANNING around the empty room.

BACK TO SCENE

HANDHELD - Abel and Zed flip out, madly search the place - the bathroom, the closet...

They look at each other, all Laurel and Hardy. Bolt out the door -

cut to

147 int-HOTEL CORRIDOR

They pop into frame, confused, and hear, wafting in the open balcony window: the unmistakable opening refrain of "The Wedding March".

They scramble over to find -

THEIR BIRDSEYE POV

The ceremony has begun. Ernest stands waiting at the altar as Veronica walks the aisle with Mike (who's frantically looking all around) and Steve.

BACK TO SCENE

ABEL/zed

NOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!--

148 ext-POOLSIDE

The MUSIC STOPS and all heads turn toward -

Abel and Zed hanging over the edge of the balcony.

zed

Veronica! Veronica, *wait!!*

Veronica is in a state of shock. Mike likewise. While Ernest is getting righteously pissed.

ernest

Whatthe..?

abel

V, we've gotta talk to you!

veronica

What are you guys doing??!

zed

Don't move. Hold on...

Zed looks down. Does some calculating in his head.Then dives off the balcony with the agile grace of an Olympic contender.

As the CROWD OF WEDDING GUESTS watches slackjawed, he glides through the air in SLOOOOMO, recalling Veronica's freefalling pennies, till -

***splish*.**

He slices through the water's surface like a hot knife through butter.

Abel, shitting twinkies, looks down... Holy *Vertigo*, it's far. He looks toward

HIS POV

Veronica shaking her head at him, "Don't you dare be an idiot too" all over her face...

BACK TO SCENE

Abel, deciding.

abel

(waves)

I'm takin' the stairs.

He disappears from the balcony.

Veronica, relieved, looks towards

HER POV

Zed swimming to the edge of the pool where confused WEDDING GUESTS gather to help him out of the water...

BACK TO SCENE

Veronica starts toward him when -

abel (os)

YAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA--

Veronica whips around, sees

HER POV

Abel (changed his mind) takes a running leap, catapults off the balcony - his arms and legs flailing as he sails through the night sky - also in SLOOOOOOMO -

abel

-AAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHH---

SPLAAAASH!!!!!!!! He hits the water with the force of a space capsule returning from orbit.

Zed, crawling out of the pool, soggily shambles towards Veronica -

zed

Ron. Ron, you've gotta hear us out. We still love you--

POW! Ernest socks Zed across the jaw sending him ***SPLASH!*** back into the chlorinated depths as FEMALE GUESTS *SHRIEK.*

ernest

Call the cops! I want these hooligans arrested for drunk and disorderly conduct!

As Abel paddles over to Zed's aid:

abel

V, we love you and we can change!

Zed blows out a mouthful of water, sputtering.

zed

I got a new job! At Guitar Center! I get an employee discount so I'm saving for new drums...!

abel

And I finally got an advance on my novel!

Veronica, at the pool's rim, rolls her eyes as the CROWD watches in disbelief.

veronica

You *guys*...

zed

Please give us one more chance..!

Veronica looks at Abel and Zed, pathetically treading water. Turns to Mike who simply shrugs her shoulders.

ernest

(coming over to stake his territory)

Veronica.

abel

V, who do you love? Him or us? Tell us once and for all and we'll leave you alone.

Veronica just stands there unable to speak as Ernest loops his arm possessively around her.

ernest

Will somebody please call the cops??

(trying to lead Veronica away)

Veronica, come on.

abel

If you can truthfully, in your heart, say you don't love us anymore, that you only love him, we'll just go away. You'll never hear from us again...

Veronica looks at Abel and Zed.

ernest

(squeezing her hand)

Don’t listen to them, Veronica.

Veronica looks at Ernest.

abel

What’s it gonna be, V? The decision is yours -

Veronica looks at Abel and Zed... Back at Ernest...

abel (os)

It’s all up to you...

CU - The complete, helpless confusion on Veronica’s face...

smash cut to

149 *int-PINK VOID*

veronica

Well, what would you *have done?*

cut to

REVERSE ANGLE - An utterly resplendent golden-haired BABY GIRL, swaddled in snuggly blankets. Sound asleep, peaceful as an angel.

back to

CU - Veronica, a smile spreading across her face as the CAMERA INEXORABLY TRACK/ZOOMS BACK revealing that the “void” from which she has been narrating the entire story is, in fact, a room. A baby girl’s room, all done up in soft, rose petal pink.

Abel and Zed enter the chamber which we now recognize as a refurbished version of their old bedroom. They join Veronica by the bassinet, flanking her on either side, gazing down at their dozing daughter.

ABEL
My eyes.

ZED
My mouth.

ABEL
Yeah, ‘specially when it’s sorta hanging open like -
(demonstrates)

ZED
Luckily she didn’t get your nose.

ABEL
Oh right, Baboon Nostrils.

veronica

Boys.

The guys stop bickering, look at Veronica.

veronica

You’re both wrong, as usual.

(Mona Lisa smile)

She looks exactly like I did when I was a baby.

Abel and Zed both check out

THEIR POV

The beautiful newborn in a deep, happy sleep.

BACK TO SCENE

They turn in unison towards the glowing Veronica.

abel

Now that you mention it -

(tracing the tip of her nose)

Her perfect little nose does look familiar...

zed

(tenderly kissing her eyes)

And her crazy long eyelashes...

abel

(kissing her mouth)

Her soft, sweet lips ...

zed

(nuzzling her neck)

And creamy white skin...

Flush with the heat of love and good, healthy lust, Veronica pulls both guys close.

abel

So are we ever gonna find out who the father is?

veronica

I already know.

Abel and Zed both look at Veronica.

ZED

She's mine, isn't she? I knew it!

ABEL

In your dreams, bozo. 100% mine, right V?

veronica

Nope...

(face lighting up)

She's **ours.**

With that, our comely menage-a-trois start to, once again, do what menages do... As they drop out of sight, vacating the pink frame, a fresh, boisterous Remix of BJORK's "There's More To Life Than This" *KICKS IN and we*

fade to **BLACK**

ROLL END CREDITS.....

But, as the CREDITS RUN OUT and the SONG ENDS -

SOUND PULLUP

The WAIL of a BABY CRYING...

back to

150 *int-PINK VOID/BEDROOM*

As the crying continues, Veronica, then Abel and Zed reappear in the empty pink frame shot from the POV of the baby's crib. The three of them in a state of total disarray, hair disheveled, clothes half-off -

veronica

(straightening her top)

Oh, c'mere you....whatsamatter?.....

She reaches into the crib, lifting her baby out. As she exits OS left:

ZED

She need a diaper?

ABEL

Nah, she must be hungry...

Veronica and baby crisscross in and out of the frame with Abel and Zed trailing behind, picking up rattles, diapers, stuffed animals... anything they can think of to pacify the wailing infant.

ZED
Here, lemme hold her.

ABEL
No, me.

ZED
Ron, it's my turn, right?

veronica

Guys...

ZED
(waving a toy, singing a song)
Oh, don't cry...

ABEL
Look, your ugly face is scaring her.
(to baby)
You don't like Ugly Gorilla Man, do you?

The baby WAILS louder.

ABEL
Yeah, I don't blame you.

ZED
You're the one scarin' her.

veronica

Guys...

As the happy family scene degenerates into Marx Brothers-esque chaos, FANCY CURSIVE LETTERS start writing themselves across the screen, announcing it's

The End